HINDUISM AND MODERN SCIENCE

BY

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MADRAS MEDICAL SERVICE (RETIRED)

FOREWORD BY

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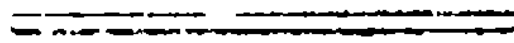


Om! bhadram karnebhih shrinuyama Devah,
bhadram pashyemakshibhir yajatrah.
sthirairangaih tustuvamstanoobhi,
Vyashema Devahitam yadayuh.

Om! Shantih, Shantih, Shantih, Om.

"O Gods, may we, with our ears, hear what is auspicious! O ye! fit to be worshipped, may we, with our eyes, see what is auspicious! may we enjoy what life is allotted to us by God with our bodies strong of limb, offering Him our Praises!

Om! Peace! Peace! Peace!



DEDICATED

With all Humility and Love

to

His Holiness

Srimat Sukritendra Tirtha Swamiji

of

Sree Kasi Mutt

(The living embodiment of the Sacred Wisdom of the East)

FOREWORD

India developed a civilization of a very high order almost from the very beginning of man's civilized life on this Earth. Civilizations have sprung up in various other parts of the world, namely, in China, in Mesapotamia, Egypt, Carthage, Greece and Rome. These civilizations perished; the countries are there; the descendents of the people of the countries are also there. But the civilization itself exists only in history at present. The civilization of India is still a living force. The civilization of Greece and Rome too may be a living force in the modern European life; but the civilization has formed the foundation of modern life in other parts of the world than where they originated. It is only in India that the civilization has continued its unbroken development in the land of its growth and where it even now flourishes as a living force in the country.

When other civilizations originated, Indian civilization was old; when other civilizations perished and when new civilizations have sprung up, even now, Indian civilization keeps young. There must be some power in that civilization which made this unique phenomenon possible.

India spread her civilization beyond the borders of the country and we see vestiges of that spread of Indian civilization in countries to the North and to the East of India. But Indian civilization was not shifted from the land of its origin. India occupied the leading position among the civilized nations of ancient world; India was the centre of world's civilization; people came from other countries to India to learn wisdom. This pre-eminent position of India, which started at the dawn of civilization in the world, continued till very recent times. There has been a change in India during the last century or two. India has lost her position; India has ceased to lead the world in the matter of civiliza-

tion. It is more a political fall for India; the decadence is only for *Indians*. But Indian civilization itself is full of vigour. It is an object of great admiration for the whole world; it is studied with great enthusiasm in the whole world. It is preserved in practice with great reverence in India of today, perhaps only by a small minority. It looms large even today in the public life of the country, at least in an indirect way.

In China, the question of the value of certain customs and ways of life of a few milleniums ago, in modern life does not appear at all as of any public importance. The life of ancient Mesapotamia has no place in the modern life of Irak. Modern Egypt does not worry about the relation of the ways of life in the country many milleniums ago, to its present day life. But in India, there is no question of public importance arising in its everyday life that is not even now influenced by the ways of life in the country in ancient times. It is in this sense that I have said that ancient Indian civilization is still a living force in the country and that it looms large even today in the public life of the country in an indirect way.

The attitude of modern India towards her ancient civilization exhibits itself in different ways. There are the modern "educated" or rather sophisticated, persons who do not accept a thing like ancient Indian civilization; to them civilized life started in India only in recent times after her contact with the modern West. According to them, there was till then, only a primitive life of superstitions and reprehensible social customs. There are others who see some germs of civilization in the achievements of ancient India; they say that in nearly all lines of human activities India had been *anticipating* modern civilized life. There are still others who regard everything ancient as sacred and unchangeable. They find a great purpose in every custom that has evolved in the country; they say that everything has been systematised on a very *scientific basis*, and they

regard everything in ancient India as occupying a far higher level of civilization than in modern times; they even doubt whether modern civilization can at any time reach up to those heights at all.

Whatever may be the particular attitude adopted by the various exponents of ancient Indian civilization, what is important is the fact that the question is being considered as of great importance in the day to day life of the country. In various social legislations relating to modern life, like the position of women in the social organisation, their rights to property, their rights for divorce and re-marriage, caste inequalities etc., both the sponsors of the movements and the oppenents look at the question as intimately related to the past ways of life in the country, and not merely from the point of view of their expediency and necessity in modern times. This shows that the civilized life of the country is certain to be an unbroken continuity of her past life; that means that with all changes needed by the changes in times, the civilization of ancient India will continue in the country in the future also. Thus the study of ancient Indian civilization is not a mere academic matter; it is not a mere antiquarian curiosity. It is a practical affair in the life of the country at present and will continue so in future also.

In this way, expositions of ancient Indian civilization in modern times have a great practical value. There is a very strong adverse opinion current at present in India regarding the possibility of preserving ancient customs and ways of life in the country and the suitability of such customs and ways of life for modern conditions. This strong adverse opinion so common in modern times, produces the need for an examination of the question whether there is any redical opposition between ancient ways and modern science. It is to meet such a real need in our present day life that such a book as the present one becomes serviceable in the public life of the nation. The book has a practical value; its interest is not a mere abstract one.

One may not agree with all that is said in this book. The book is written by a medical practitioner of recognised standing. But the book need not be taken as a prescription from a medical practitioner for any ailment of a physical nature. It is more like articles exhibited at a shop-window, for people to examine and select according to their needs, tastes and abilities. The author has presented a certain aspect of ancient Indian civilization. He has given his own exposition. There will be many who will agree with him; there may be many who will disagree with him. But all must consider the presentation dispassionately and seriously.

The book is comprehensive; there is a wealth of material collected and presented in an orderly way. There is honesty and conviction behind the presentation. When I write a Foreword, I do it only as recommending the book for serious study. It does not mean that I agree with what has been written in the book. I read the book with interest; I find that I profited by the reading of the book. I myself find it very difficult to accept the doctrine of the spiritual basis of caste distinction. Caste distinction as a factor in civic functions is one thing; hereditary disabilities and privileges, without any possibility of escape and without any corresponding responsibilities is another thing. If a general four-fold classification is made of civic functions in any orderly State, few can complain. But classification of citizens on a hereditary basis is against all canons of social equity and cannot be explained on the basis of a spiritual value.

Similarly if pollution after the death of a member of the family is a quarantine measure, then one wonders why this pollution is for the members of the family, even for such of the members who are in very distant parts of the country, and that even those who were in attendence on the dying person have no such pollution if they do not belong to the family.

The subject dealt with in the book rouses one's thoughts.

And that is the real value of the book. Let us not evade the problem; let us face realities. The book brings us face to face with certain realities in life.

University of Madras.

C. Kunhan Raja.

Key to transliteration

The Italic "*a*" amidst Roman script and *vice-versa* is to be pronounced as in "Car".

PREFACE

In the preparation of this brochure I have consulted only the most eminent works – works of master-minds, and confess that in several instances I could not resist the temptation to cull *verba-tim* and freely therefrom, so as to preserve the initial beauty of style, force and clearness of expresssion, accuracy of statement and originality of ideas and observations. I have learnt a good deal from them; they are, indeed, my Guru-s, and I hereby respectfully pay them my homage and pray for their grace, without which no undertaking can ever bear fruit.

I have to acknowledge with thanks the kind help rendered by my esteemed friends, Dr. M. V. Shastry – Ayurveda Bhushan, Mangalore, Sri N. Anantha Up*a*dhy*a*ya, Samskrit Pandit, St. Aloysius' College, Mangalore, and Sri P. Padmanabha Bhat, Vidwan Shiromani, B. O. L., Samskrit Pandit, Presidency College, Madras.

I must express here my heart-felt gratitude to Prof. Kunhan Raja for the readiness with which he complied with my request to write a foreword to this humble effort of mine. Believing as I do in a Providence "that shapes our ends," I hold that it is not due to a mere accident that a scholar of Prof. Raja's accomplishments should have condescended to oblige me, appreciating, no doubt, the spirit that informs this work more than the achievement itself.

To my learned critics, I would respectfully remind them of the old adage – "to err is human, to forgive is divine" – which a novice like myself can take shelter under–

Bhranteh purusha dharmatwat
doshah syat eva sarvatha,
tamuddharantu kripaya
vidwamso gatamatsarah.

"To err is human; mistakes there might most assuredly be in every way. May the learned, divested of jealousy remove them out of compassion."
Nevertheless, I respectfully solicit criticism, for it serves as an eye-opener.

Planters' Lane,
Mangalore.
18th Jan. 1947.

M. A. Kamath.

INTRODUCTION

"Science has been defined by its votaries in various ways. A method which "applies to all reasoning about facts which proceed. from their accurate classification, to the appreciation of their relationship and consequence" as knowledge and truth, as law and perfection, as an attitude of mind, as intellectual orientation, as hypothesis and commonsense-these are some of the conceptions of science held by various scientists. But all these can be reduced to two basic meanings or aspects of science, which are: firstly, that science is a method of search for the Real in the realm of the phenomenal, as philosophy, religion and mysticism are methods of search for the Real in the realm of the noumenal. The former deals with *prakriti*, the latter with the *purusha*.........Science is the application of man's divine faculty of reducing a vast array of facts and 'an illimitable assembly of other worlds' (Sir Oliver Lodge), to a small compass, into an easily comprehensible and interacting system of knowledge. This is the pure, theoretical or philosophical aspect of science.

"The second aspect of science is its application to the problems of life. Here, science descends from its empyrean heights of abstract speculation and enters the haunts of the humble. It confronts the question of human welfare, man's physical well-being, comfort, health, his emotion, stability, refinement, security, his intellectual opulence and spiritual adventure. Here Science becomes the handmaid of the practical art of living and human association, here and now, not in the far off future and in the promised land of heaven. This is the pragmatic or utilitarian aspect of science...........

"Science, from both points of view, has an ancient and sacred ancestry.........The beginnings of science lie in the early Vedic period. *Sama* and *Atharva Vedas* laid the

foundations; out of these grew up the *Upa Vedas, Vedangas* and the Six Schools of Thought. Medicine, music and dancing, archery and military science, architecture, the science of phonetics, of metrics, of grammar, the science of etymology, astrology and astronomy and the Science of ritual formed the Upa Vedas and Vedangas, while the Six Schools developed the systems of logic, the atomic conception of matter, the relationship between matter and spirit. the science of expansion of powers of consciousness and of self-realisation through meditation, the ritualism and philosophy of unqualified monism. All these applied sciences were based on Natural or exact sciences. They were not empirical assumptions, but experimental systems of Science and History." **(Dr. Kewal Motwani - Science and Society in India)**

"During the past 25 years there has been a profound change in the scientist's picture of the physical world, and science used to look at Nature as something almost apart from man. But now, Sir James Jeans tells us that the essence of science is that "man no longer sees nature as something distinct from himself." And then the old question arises, which troubled the thinkers of the Upanishads: How can the knower be known? How can the eyes that can see external objects see themselves? And if the external is part and parcel of the internal, what we perceive or conceive is but a projection of our minds; and the universe and nature and the soul and mind and body, the transcendent and the immanent are all essentially one, how then are we, within the limited framework of our minds, to understand this mighty science of things objectively? Science has begun to touch these problems, and though they may elude it, still the earnest scientist to-day is the prototype of the philosopher and the man of religion of earlier ages. "In this materialistic age of ours" says

Einstein, "the serious scientific workers are the only profoundly religious people."*

"Thus, the question that troubled the philosophers of old can be said to have come up again, but in a different form and in a different context. How to reconcile the phenomenal life of the World with the inner spiritual life of the individual. The Physicians have discovered that it is not enough to treat the body of the individual or of society as a whole. In recent years, medical men familiar with the finding of modern psychopathology have abandoned the antithesis between "organic" and "functional" diseases and lay great stress on the psychological factor. "This is the greatest error in the treatment of sickness" wrote Plato, "that there are physicians for the body, physicians for the soul and yet the two are one indivisible."

"Einstein, most eminent among scientists tells us that "the fate of the human race was more than ever dependent on its moral strength to-day. The way to a joyful and happy state is through renunciation and self-limitation everywhere."

"He takes us back suddenly from this proud age of science to the old philosophers, from the lust for power and profit motive to the spirit of renunciation with which India has been so familiar. Probably most other scientists of to-day will not agree with him in this, or when he says: "I am absolutely convinced that no wealth in the world can help humanity forward even in the hands of the most devoted workers in the cause. The example of great and pure characters, is the only thing that can produce fine ideas and noble deeds. Money only appeals to selfishness and always tempts its owners irresistibly to abuse it."

(Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru - The Discovery of India)

* Fifty years ago Swami Vivekananda regarded modern science as a manifestation of the real religious spirit, for it sought to understand truth by sincere effort.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I.

ANCIENT HINDU CIVILISATION

The primitive races lived by hunting, and they naturally occupied the regions of forest and jungle where animals were plenty; the early pastoral people, people who kept animals, naturally sought food for their herds in the grass lands where the land was neither too much covered with trees or jungle nor too wet; but when man learned the art of cultivation they naturally sought the well-watered fertile plains, the flood-plains of the great rivers. It is for this reason that the recorded history of man's civilisation has its beginnings in the four countries, where great rivers flow through fertile soil. These are Egypt, the land of the Nile, Mesopotamia, the land of the twin-rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, China, the land of the Hwang Ho and Yangtze Kiang, and India, the land of the Indus and the Ganges.

In all these countries man first learned to live a peaceful productive life, a life in which he found time to do other things besides struggle for his bare existence. In short, it is a life in which there was leisure, not simply for basking in the sun as animals do, but free time for using his mind and hand for creating and inventing new things or improving upon the old.

In fact, the ability to secure this kind of leisure for every one and to learn to use it creatively is the key to man's progress in this world.

The beginning of the Hindu Civilisation dates roughly during the period, 2000 - 1000 B. C. from the time the Indo-Aryans crossed the Indus (*Sindhu*) and nearly completed their work of colonising the Indian Continent. The Hindus, therefore, call their country "*Aryavarta*" or

the abode of the Aryans; and the term is applied to the whole tract of land extending from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, and from the Irravadi and the Bay of Bengal in the east to the Indus (*Sindhu*) and the Arabian Sea. Inspite of this splendid geographical isolation from the rest of the world, the country has not been immune to foreign influences upon her religion and philosophy. In fact, almost all movements of thought in human history have invariably affected India too, and left their imprint upon her culture and civilisation. The Persian, the Greek, the Roman and the Scythian - all had their share in the building up of that remarkable composite, the Indian civilisation. But the basis of that civilisation was that given by the Indo-Aryans, and that basis has continued through all its vicissitudes and amidst its different phases.

How the Indo-Aryans came to be named Hindus was in this way: the river *Sindhu* (Indus) marked the western frontier of the ancient Aryan settlement in the Punjab; on the west of the river were the Iranians (Persians); and it was by the name of the Sindhu river that the Iranians called the Aryans. But they could not properly pronounce the word Sindhu, but did so as Hindu. In course of time the Aryans themselves adopted this name from the Iranians.

The name Hindu is very ancient and when the Hindus spread all over India, the original Arya-varta came to be known as Hindusthan, the abode of the Hindus.

The initial or formative phase of the Hindu civilisation is represented in the institutions and literature of the Indo-Aryans, and is conveniently designated and distinguished as Vedic Civilisation, with reference to its sources in the vast body of Vedic literature, comprising in the main, the *Samhitas*, the *Brahmanas* and the *Upanishads*.

The Vedic Civilisation has been the work of numerous

Rishis (Sages or Seers) and Kings, in whom were embodied its characteristic ideals of thought and life, and the religious history of the Vedic period is associated with many a generation of Seers, such as Atri, Angiras, Priyamedha Bhrigu, Vasistha, Vishwamitra and so on, who produced and handed down from sire to son special bodies of Vedic hymns, which became the property of their respective families. These hymns relate to the great Laws of God or Spiritual truths discovered and recorded by the Seers, who had lived close to God in every age. They directly perceived them while in a transcendental state of consciousness. All these truths, however, can be perceived again and again at all times and at all ages through the same means.

But unfortunately none of these numerous names of the leaders of thought and action in old Vedic society can be given a historic reality for want of concrete details and evidence regarding their life and work. Hence they must of necessity remain as mere names and abstractions.

There is, however, atleast one Vedic character, of whom it is possible to work out a comparatively concrete account. It is Yagnavalkya. He may be said to be a representative man of his age, one of the most typical embodiments of all that was best and highest in vedic culture and civilisation. He is also one of the last Vedic Rishies associated with the later development of Vedic thought and life, as expressed in the elaborate literature of the Brahmanas and Upanishads. Hence Vedic culture in its most developed and typical form can best be studied in him, the acknowledged intellectual and spiritual leader of his time.

Yajnavalkya is the first reputed Seer of the *Shukla* (white) *Yajurveda*. He is represented as a prominent authority on rituals in the *Shathapatha Brahmana*, and on philosophy in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. His con-

temporary was King Janaka of Videha (the modern Bihar) a learned Prince of the times, with whose name are associated the stories of Sukadeva and Sree Ramachandra. King Janaka was a constant disputant with Yajnavalkya.

Another disputant was Ashwala, whose learning gained him the high office of *Hotri* (sacrificial priest) at King Janaka's. Artabhaga and Gargi, (a woman saint) were his other contemporaries and disputants.

Yajnavalkya had two wives, Maitreyi and Katyayani, of whom the former was conversant with the Brahman (*Brahmapara*).

The educational and cultural conditions and opportunities of the country in the days of Yajnavalkya are illustrated in his life. First, there were the small domestic schools or homes of learning run by a Guru, who admitted to his family as many boarder-pupils as he could manage. When their education is finished after several years of *Brahmacharya* or disciplined life, they generally return home and settle down as house-holders (*Grihasthas*). Note here that the *Samavartana* ceremony that is celebrated just before marriage refers to this "returning home" after education.

But the more earnest students, in whom the love of knowledge was a passion, would wander through the Country seeking out for their satisfaction other more distinguished teachers at different seats of learning.

Thus, education was very largely spread and promoted in higher stages by learned debates amongst scholars of various provinces, who would seek such opportunities for establishing their philosophical positions or scientific theories, and thereby intellectual status and eminence.

King Janaka of Videha, Ajatashatru of Kashi and Ashwapathi Kekaya were all the patrons of learning. Themselves leaders of thought, they drew students for instruction in the special truths of which they were the

repositories. They would summon congresses of learned men at their Courts, and lavishly reward skill in debate and proved intellectual superiority, while their own gain was the "feast of reason" which the debates provided.

Lastly, it is worthy of note that women were not denied their share in that intellectual life. They were also admitted to public debates in learned Conferences, in which they could play an active part; they developed philosophical positions of their own, which they were free to expand and establish in such conferences. While at home in the privacy and seclusion of domestic life, they could enjoy a complete fellowship with their husbands in culture and learning and join in a common investigation of the ultimate problems and truths in a common spiritual life.

The liberty of life and learning enjoyed by the women of ancient India ought to be recalled in later times. It was in this atmosphere of freedom and spirituality that the human mind in India was enabled to achieve some of the greatest triumphs in the pursuit of Truth and the solution of the mysteries of Existence.

Our country has, thus, been the birth-place of many a Saint, Sage and Prophet. Through scores of centuries it has been pre-eminently a land of religion. Its hills, mountains, rivers, seas and cities have been made holy by the touch of religion. These holy places strewn all over the Country have made Hindusthan really a holy land. Through the ages myriads of pilgrims have been rushing to and fro from different corners of the Country to visit these holy shrines. And religion has all along been the mainspring of the life of its people.

It was their religion that gave birth to the glorious culture of the Hindus. Even in the very ancient days, as we shall see later, the Hindus produced high class painting, sculpture, architecture, music, drama and poetry. They

wrote learned treatises on various subjects such as Grammar, Philology, Logic, Philosophy, Politics, Astronomy, Medicine and Surgery. They put in valuable research work in Chemistry and have left behind sure proofs of their amazing skill in Engineering, Irrigation, Shipbuilding and in many other arts and crafts. And all these had their roots in religion, the ideas and ideals behind these having been inspired mostly by the Hindu Seers.

In fact the country was also once the cradle of learning for the whole world, and history bears testimony to the fact that many a nation that now walks with its head erect would have been nowhere, had it not imbued its civilisation and culture considerably from the intellectual storehouse of the ancient Hindus. And Hindusthan was at the pinnacle of glory when other nations were either not in existence or were wallowing in crass ignorance.

Now, most of the Sciences known to the present century were *not unknown* to the ancient Hindus, and one has but to look into their writings to see whether the truths propounded by them thousands of years ago do not still endure in their natural freshness.

The Hindus were the first to cultivate the Astronomical Science (*Jyotisha*); and modern astronomers all admit the great antiquity of their observations. Cassini, Bailly and Playfair have all stated that the observations taken by the Hindu astronomers upwards of 3000 B. C. are still extant, and prove a considerable degree of progress already made at that period. The ancient Hindus fixed the Calender, observed and predicted the eclipses and were acquainted with the phases of the Moon and motions of the several planets. According to Colebrooke they were more correct than Ptolemy in their notions regarding the precession of the equinoxes.

In Mathematics (*Ganitha*) the Hindus had attained a high degree of proficiency. They invented the Decimal

system, the Differential, the Integral and the Infinitesimal Calculi. The world owes to them the invention of the numerical symbols. They also discovered Geometry (*Bhoomithi*) and Trigonometry (*Trikonamithi*), in both of which they made great advance. Most of the credit given to Pythagoras for the discovery of mathematical truths properly belongs to the ancient Hindus.

Their knowledge of Chemistry was very much advanced. They were familiar with the preparation of Sulphuric, Nitric and Hydrochloric acids, the Oxides of Copper, Lead, Tin and Zinc, as well as many Chlorides, Nitrates, Sulphates and Carbonates.

The Sage Panini was the first to teach the formative principles of words, and his system of Grammar, the first in the world, is the admiration of the Western and Eastern scholars.

Lexicography was known to the Aryans long before its acquaintance was made by any other nation in the world. In the Vedic literature it is treated under the heading *Nighantu*.

Music appears to have been cultivated to the highest pitch of perfection by the *A*ryans, who were the first to invent the *gamut*. Their music is systematic and refined.

India is the home of Architectural beauty; domes, cupolas, minarets and many ingenious works of architecture, which have stood the tempest of time, testify to this fact in silent eloquence; and the ancient Greeks, who are praised for their skill in this particular art owed not a little to the Hindus. Dr. W. W. Hunter supposes that Alexander, the Great, left artists in India to copy the Indian style of architecture, and that these imported it into their mother-country.

It is not so well known that Egypt was linked to India in the past, that the Puranas have a full description of the Country and of the source of the Nile, which was

variously named *Nila, Kali, Krishna*—all having the same meaning, dark or blue. The Puranas say: "The celebrated and holy river takes rise from the lake Amara in the region of the Holy Land of the Soma-Giri, or the Mountains of the Moon." When the source of the Nile was discovered, or re-discovered in 1860, the explorer had with him a map of the region drawn from Puranic description, and he records in his Journal that he found the lake which he called Victoria Nyanza, still called by the natives "Lake *Amara*"—the Lake of Immortality or the Lake of the Gods," and the mountains round about still called in the native tongue, "Mountains of the Moon." It is significant that the Lotus is the sacred and royal flower of both Egypt and India, that the ancient name of the Egyptian Horus (The Deliverer) is *Hari*, meaning, "He who steals our sins." A study of the religious symbolism of the two countries gives overwhelming evidence of this very ancient link between the two lands, and a study of Indian thought would afford many a valuable clue to Egyptologists.

Now, the Vedic Aryan cultivated his land, and lived in neat and handsome mansions; and one of the most important discoveries of modern Archæology is the Indus-Valley civilisation discovered at Harappa in the Punjab many years ago.

But it was not until 1922 that Mr. Banerji, while working on a second-century Buddhist *Sthupa* at Mohan-jodaro in Sindh, came across the remains of a great pre-historic city belonging to the Chalco-lithic age. This was excavated with surprising results:

"The town is well-laid out; its streets are at right angles running due north and south, and east and west. The main street which is 53 feet wide has been traced over half a mile and is unpaved. The side roads are about half this width. The buildings are of burnt brick set in mud mortar. The windows and doors open on the main street,

and it is possible that some were several storeys high with flat roofs. An unusual feature of the houses is the presence of bath-rooms, and also of an elaborate drainage system *greatly in advance of anything known in later India.* For this purpose pottery drain-pipes and receptacles were laid down communicating with the street-drain or gutter.

"No temple was discovered, but a large public bath, 39×23 feet, has been unearthed. This bath, which was rendered water-tight is provided with steps leading down to the water, a promenade and compartments for the bathers. Ingenious arrangements for filling and emptying the bath are provided.

"Just to the south of the bath is a large building over 200 feet long and 100 feet wide, which may have been the palace."

It must be pointed out here that the main principles of town-planning of ancient India as described above, compare very favourably indeed with the teaching of modern Engineering and Sanitation; and, if, however, as modern sanitation teaches, housing condition may be taken as a good index of the general sanitary condition and hygienic habits of a people, this is a very good proof indeed of the skill of the ancient Hindus. "Even as late as 1802 ships and war-ships for England were built by India, and England borrowed plans and designs from Indian builders." (Kumarappa).

The Hindu Law is as old as their religion. Manu is the oldest of the Hindu writers on Law, and his work-Manu-Smriti—still forms the basis of the Hindu social fabric. It forms an important record of the Hindu society atleast 3000 years old. Other writers on Law like Y*a*jnavalkya and Par*a*shara are also held in great reverence and are still quoted as high authorities in deciding subtle points of dispute. The *Smriti-s* (Dharma Sh*a*stras) prescribe certain laws and regulations for the carrying on of in-

dividual, family, social and national life; they contain also rules of morality, of celibacy and abstinence, rules of marriage, of diet, etc.—all from the hygienic and economic aspects.

They prohibit (*nishedha*), on the other hand, some of our harmful customs like child-marriage, sexual abuse, the drink-evil etc. also from the same stand-point. The Hindu society is founded on and governed by these Codes. We shall have an occasion to deal with these questions again later in these pages, and in the light of modern Science.

2

Now, India out-distances all other countries of the World in the domain of Philosophy. There are six systems of Indian Philosophy, called *Darshanas* or Mirrors of Knowledge:

1. *Nyaya* or Logical.
2. Sankhya or Discriminative.
3. *Vaisheshika* or Atomic.
4. *Yoga* or contemplative.
5. *Mimamsa* or ritualistic; and
6. *Vedanta* or the finale or end of the Vedas.

The aim and object of these schools is to solve the problem of Creation. The Hindus have a passion for Philosophy and have given their best energies to the better understanding of the subject. They were the first nation to distinguish between Matter and Spirit. While the world at large has been busy confining its attention to dead matter and its properties, the Hindu from the very dawn of history has devoted himself staunchly to the study of the Spirit. Prof. Max Muller justly observes:

"The Indian Aryan lives this life with a full consciousness of his being a temporary sojourner, who has no

permanent interest whatever in the things of this world. Being given to spiritual pursuits rather than to earthly comforts, he is by nature better fitted to solve the problem of existence, which puzzles many a thinker and metaphysician of our age."

All branches of learning have their origin in the Vedas (*vit* = to know, Lat. *videre* = to know) or Knowledge or Science. The Vedas, the Hindus believe to be the Science of the Universal Spirit, as distinguished from an individual mortal; they believe that the creation has a Maker (*Dhata*) and He is Eternal and without a cause or begining (*Anadi*) and who, as He has evolved the Universe out of His own Consciousness, is an All-Knowing-Being, and being All-Knowing and Eternal is All-Bliss or Happiness Supreme, (*Sat-Chit-Ananda*), which knows no change. And the Vedas are supposed to be His revealed Knowledge. Knowledge, it is believed, is "acquired" and not "created." If knowledge could be created, instruction, it is argued, would as a rule be futile. From time immemorial it has been handed down from father to son or preceptor to disciple.

The Hindus, therefore, trace all Knowledge under the Sun to the Supremely High, who is the fountain-head of all learning—*Eeshanah sarva vidyanam.* "He is the Lord of all kinds of knowledge, the Source from which all knowledge flows." Hence the Hindu will not accept a statement unless it is supported by an authority of what has been revealed to them in their Scriptures, or by the testimony of the by-gone ages. Their line of investigation thus, differs entirely from that followed by modern investigators, inasmuch as the latter are solely guided by their intelligence in establishing a truth, which must remain under trial until Science in its progressive course has reached its goal. The religion and philosophy inculcated in the Vedas are acknowledged to be of the most sublime character. This unmistakably proves that the Aryans

were the most enlightened race in the dawn of History. Such a state of civilisation which exercises a potent influence on Hindu Society even to this day could not have been attained in a day; it must have required a long course of training, and must take the nation back to the remotest antiquity.

When the state of civilisation was so perfect, and when all the useful sciences were regularly studied, there should be no wonder if the Science of Medicine too received its share of attention. This Science forms part of the Vedas and is known as the *A*yurveda (The Science of Life).

It is based on the Rig-Veda in so far as it relates to the knowledge of Medicine; and as to Surgery, this seems to have been derived from the Atharva-Veda.

The *A*yurveda is an *Upa-Veda* or supplemental Veda; the Science is considered to be co-existent with the First Teacher–the Primary Cause of the Universe. As already mentioned the Hindus believe that, like all other Sciences, the Science of Medicine has also been revealed to them.

The Yajur-Veda speaks of God as the First Divine Physician, *prathamo daivyo bhishak* who can drive away all ills. Another Vedic hymn addresses Him as *bhishak tamam twa bhishajam shrinomi* "I hear Thou art the foremost among Physicians!" Elsewhere, He is styled, "the repertory of all Sciences, and Physician for all worldly ills."

Brahma, the first member of the Hindu Trio was the first to propound the Healing Art; He composed the *A*yurveda. This sacred medical work treats of the subject of life, describes the conditions tending to prolong life or shorten it; and dwells on the nature of Disease, its cause and mode of prevention and treatment.

Now, the Vedas contain nothing but the Laws of Nature; they describe vividly the entire panorama of Nature. As such they are not exclusively intended for

the Hindus alone. Every human being living in whatsoever part of the World can derive benefit from them, and should understand the laws of Nature for the proper conduct of life in this world. The Hindu religion perpetuates, as we saw, the memory of the place of settlement of the early Aryans that migrated from Central Asia to the Indus-Valley, their culture and civilisation. The art of healthful living and the art of conducting the short journey of life from "cradle to grave" by overcoming the many obstacles in its way, is the Religion of the Hindus; and the laws of Hygiene and Sanitation form the two essentials or limbs of the religion. It is these latter that have been incorporated in the *Smritis* (or the Institutes) of the ancient Law-givers, *niyama pravartakah* like Manu, Yajnavalkya and Parashara, but in the name of religion.

Hinduism is thus a Science, and the Vedas and other sacred Lore treat of the hidden secrets of Nature; and it is on these fundamental laws that the Healing art of the Hindus mainly depends; and unless these basic principles are mastered and properly understood, it is not possible for one to understand the theories underlying the practice of the Hindu System of Medicine and Surgery.

Even the theories on which the Western system of Medicine depends, however advanced the Science be, are not often stable, but are liable to change as knowledge advances. And there are so many phenomena of life, which the Western Science of Biology or Physiology cannot adequately explain, for example, the feats of wonder, as voluntary suspension of breathing and circulation, remaining entombed under the ground for a number of days without air, food and light, and resurrection performed by the Hindu Yogis, and the phenomenon of *Samadhi* for which the term "trance" has been wrongly applied. Scientists, however, say that these phenomena

are more or less allied to the condition of hibernation of lower animals-a condition of torpidity which the animal passively undergoes in time of extreme cold, famine or drought. This is no explanation whatever of the phenomenon of *Samadhi*, as this is purely a transcendental state of consciousness attained by Yoga, and the Hindu mind is careful enough not to confuse reveries and hypnotic spells with it.

Next, the Hindus consider that it will free one from all sins if one were to bathe in and drink the water of the holy *Ganga* (Ganges); and the great Shamkara, Teacher and Philosopher, who lived about 686 A. D. addresses the Ganga as: *sakala kalusha bhange* (O, ye destroyer of all sins!) and *nija jala majjanjanottarinee* (O, ye, Saviour of those who take bath in Thy holy waters by enabling them to cross the ocean of Samsara). Again, *Bhagavati! tava teere neeramathrashanoham, vigata vishaya trishnah Krishnamaradhayami*. (O Goddess! Tasting Thy water alone I am free from the longing for worldly pleasures, and I worship Lord Krishna on Thy bank). Elsewhere it is said that the Ganga water is a panacea for all ills.

Shareere jarjharee bhoote vyadhigraste kalevare oshadham Jahnavee toyam vaidyo Narayano Harih.

"When the body has become old and infirm or afflicted, the Ganga water is the panacea and Lord Narayana, the Saviour, is the Physician."

No modern sanitarian would, however, tolerate such a statement as the Ganga water, the author has seen, is exceedingly dirty and contaminated with the entire sewage of the towns on her banks and all conceivable form of filth and decaying animal and vegetable matter, had it not been for the recent (1916) revelation of the French Physician, Dr. d'Herelle, that the Ganga water contains what are known as "bacteriophages."

(These are filtrable (ultramicroscopic) bodies which

have the property of disintegrating and killing bacteria of disease. The bacteriophages exist normally in the human intestines, and when a person gets infected with any of the bowel-complaints (such as cholera, dysentery and typhoid fever), the bacteriophages develop some sort of activity towards the microbes of these diseases and kill them, and the patient recovers; the convalescent, moreover, discharges bacteriophages with his stools and infects water-supplies with the bacteriophages, so that, as the epidemic progresses, people drink water with bacteriophages in it and get protected; the epidemic then slowly dies).

Except for such natural methods of protection there would perhaps be complete annihilation by epidemics of millions of people that gather at the holy shrines all over the Country as at the *Melas*. Inscrutable are the ways of Providence!

Other Scientists have attributed the medicinal or curative properties of the water of the Gang*a* to the mineral and organic salts in solution and to the radio-activity of spring-water in general.

No doubt, modern Science has progressed very much, and of late by leaps and bounds, but it has not done to the extent of being able to solve or explain adequately the various problems of the nature above referred to. Nor has Modern Medicine, which owes practically everything to the basic discoveries in the realm of other sciences of the West, been able to disprove or contradict any of the established principles of the Ancient System.

On the other hand, most of their discoveries have turned into weapons of destruction of life and culture, and can be said to play the part of the Goddess *Kali* or *Durga* of the Hindus, and herald the approach of the *Kaliyuga*, the age of Kali, which according to some has just set in on the 2nd August 1943 A.D. Says Sir C. V. Raman, "It

is regrettable that the achievements of Science should be utilised for the massacre of mankind and contribute to its sorrows and sufferings The duty of the Scientist is to advance human knowledge and not to promote human misery. India is the land of Buddha, Mahavir and Gandhiji, and all these have given to the World the message of *Ahimsa.*"

Lord Linlithgow, until lately the Viceroy of India, while opening the Silver Jubilee Sessions of the Indian Science Congress held at Calcutta on the 3rd January 1938, said: "Even the most enthusiastic believer in Western civilisation must feel to-day a certain despondency at the apparent failure of the West to dominate its scientific discoveries and to evolve a form of society in which material progress and spiritual freedom march comfortably together. Perhaps the West will find in India's more general emphasis on simplicity and the ultimate spirituality of things, a more positive example of the truths which the most advanced minds of the West are now discovering." Again, Prof. H. J. Fleure, D.Sc., F. R. S., (Professor of Geography, University of Manchester) one of the foremost of the delegates to the above Congress, in broad-casting on the A. I. R. on 8th January 1938 from Calcutta a sketch of the story of civilisation, said:—

"The dust-heaps of antiquity are the treasures of to-day......The modern world needs India's help to-day...... Her Sages have shown ways in which men can solve controversies by transcending them......May India show Europe the way!"

When the West appeals in such vehement terms, "May India show Europe the way" by pointing out that "the dust heaps of antiquity are the treasures of to-day," and when its own culture has failed to solve the many problems of life, that confront man to-day and has failed to confer the peace and contentment necessary for the full

enjoyment of the short journey of life from "cradle to grave", is it not the sacred duty of every Indian, who has the good of his country at heart, to work for the reclamation of the treasures out of "the dust-heaps of antiquity" and revive for the benefit of humanity?

Sir James Jeans, the famous Astronomer when he presided over the Silver Jubilee Sessions of the Indian Science Congress held at Calcutta the same year (January 1938) referred to "the remarkable development of Science in India in the past 25 years" and said:

"The mathematicians and physicists will probably find their thoughts turning as mine do, to the strangely intuitive genius of Ramanujam and to the remarkable discoveries he had made in Pure Mathematics before death snatched him prematurely away; to the work of Sir Venkata Raman in Physics and especially his discovery of the effect which is known by his name all the world over; to many investigations in Sound and Theory of Music made by Raman and a host of others; to the work of Saha in Astrophysics which gave us our first understanding of the meaning of the stellar-spectra and so unlocked vast new fields of Astronomical knowledge. And I am sure that not only the Mathematicians & Physicists but workers in all other fields as well will be thinking with admiration of the remarkable ingenuity and experimental skill shown by the greatest Indian Scientist, the late Sir J. C. Bose.

"If such names and achievements as these come into the mind of a worker in one only of the many vast fields of Science, we can form some slight idea of the richness of India's contribution to Science as a whole. Thinking of this great contribution we of the British Association congratulate you most whole-heartedly not only on the completion of your 25 years of existence, but even more on the wealth of harvest you have gathered in that 25 years."

In course of time, out of the great religion of the

Hindus came two mighty offshoots-Jainism and Buddhism. Hinduism together with its branch Buddhism, spread even beyond the borders of Hindusthan. Countries like Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Cambodia, Korea, Japan, Afghanistan and Turkistan and Egypt came under the sway of one or both of these religions. Even in far off Mexico in North America scholars have detected traces of Hindu civilisation.

The people of these foreign lands hailed with delight the superior culture of the Hindus. The Hindus would never thrust their religion upon other people by force or stratagem. Peace, love, sympathy and service were their watch-words. Wherever they went they gave a lift to the people of the land from primitive life.

Surely, Hindusthan has been the mother of civilisation in the East. And evidences have already come up to prove that Hindu ideas travelled even to ancient Greece, the cradle of Western Civilisation.

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CHAPTER II

THE DAILY PRACTICES OF THE HINDUS

Manu, the Hindu Law-giver, says: "Soon after leaving the bed at dawn (Brahmia-muhurta), when the stars are still visible in the Eastern sky, one should go for calls of nature to a field, if in a village, at a distance of 200 yards from and on the northern side of the nearest dwelling, and if in town atleast 800 yards from the nearest house."

"No urine or fæces should be ejected in the high-ways"—(where people frequent), "nor on ashes"—(as this is *pavitra*, and used for cleaning cooking vessels also), "nor where cattle graze"—(so that disease may not spread to cattle through contaminated grass), "on the tilled ground"–(the object of this is clearly to prevent edible vegetables grown on the spot being contaminated with the ova of intestinal worms and giving rise to disease in the consumer, especially if they are taken uncooked. Hookworm infection, a very common scourge in India and the tropics, is spread directly from the earth, as when workmen eat their food with unclean hands, a certain amount of infected earth also enters their stomach and produces the disease in them), "on the ruins of a temple"–(from the point of view of sanctity, and perhaps of danger from reptiles), "in water"–(Drinking water if contaminated with the germs of diseases like cholera, dysentery and typhoid fever, is the most fruitful means of spreading the disease in a community), "nor on the nests of white-ants"–(white ants feed on decomposing animal excreta and cannot be easily got rid of; moreover, the nests are frequently the resorts of reptiles), "nor in ditches"–(through which water flows and might infect wells and other drinking-water supplies in the

neighbourhood)," "nor in the shade, nor darkness"-(where there is no ample sun-light or even moon-light, and sun-light is the most powerful natural disinfectant known), "and where there is fear of injury from wild animals or reptiles."

Note: The remarks in parentheses are explanatory.

Compare the above with what Sushruta says:

Na bahir vegan grama nagara devatayatana shmashana chathushpatha salilashaya pathi sannikkrishtan utsrijet. (XXIV - 91)

"Commit no nuisance inside a village, or a town, a temple, cremation ground, on a road, in a tank or on the way side."

Now, there are certain health principles involved in these directions of Manu. They are: (1) A daily walk to a distance in the cool bracing atmosphere of the morning to and fro is, as is well-known, very invigorating; it stimulates the appetite and ensures a certain amount of rest and sleep. and renders one better fitted for the day's routine.

(2) A systematic attempt every morning at answering calls of nature soon after leaving the bed trains the bowels to the habit of a daily evacuation at that hour. Constipation is thus prevented. Constipation, especially of the chronic or long-standing type, it must be understood, brings about a host of diseases like dyspepsia, diarrhœa, piles, dysentery, appendicitis, liver-troubles and intestinal toxæmia with fever, anæmia, neurasthenia etc. Constipation in children is invariably the result of postponement of the call of nature, as children busy with their toys are apt to defer the act, which in course of time leads to a break of the habit of a daily motion.

(3) Even centuries before the modern germ-theory of disease was discovered by Western Science, the ancient Hindus had known (as is evident from the teachings of the

two great Ayurvedic works of Charaka and Sushruta, written about 800 B. C. (Wilson), that the human body is a vast reservoir of nearly all ills flesh is heir to, and that the poisons of disease (which we now call germs, microbes or viruses) were thrown out of the system through the body-excretions, such as the fæces, the urine, the sputum, the nasal secretions and through the breath and sweat. The germs of disease are known as Rakshasas, and rightly so, from their harmful nature, capacity to multiply enormously within a short time and difficulty of control or destruction or annihilation. The Hindus also knew that these germs when they gained entrance into the body of the healthy could under certain circumstances produce similar disease in the latter too. In fact, the Hindus of old had not only known about the mode of spread of nearly all the epidemics including those of small-pox and plague, but the means of their prevention also. Says Sushruta: "There are a hundred and one forms of death, say the Pundits in Atharvaveda, of which only one is natural, and the rest are adventitious (from external cause) and therefore preventible.

Ekottaram mrittyushatam Atharvanah prachakshate.
Tatraikah kalasowjnastu sheshastu aganthavah smritah.

Now, certain epidemics as of cholera, dysentery and typhoid fever are all known to spread through water and food. Water contaminated with human excreta containing the germs of these diseases, when taken in by a healthy individual may under certain circumstances produce similar disease in the latter. Food may be contaminated with infective material from the neighbouring dirt-heap either through air as dust and dirt, or by the mechanical carriage of the infective material by the "filthy feet of fæcal-feeding flies fouling food," or the action of rodents, cats and poultry, dogs and other domestic animals. It is in order to prevent these means of spreading disease that calls of

nature are advised to be answered at a distance from a dwelling, and on the northern side; because this direction is contrary to that of the prevailing winds in the major part of the year.

Even the washing or cleaning of the parts after evacuation is not permitted within the tank or river, but should be done, Manu says, "with uplifted water," that is, water taken up in a separate vessel, and the cleaning itself should be done "not less than an arrow-throw distance (*sharagamya-pradesha*) from a water course." Even the soiled clothes, according to Manu, should not be washed in or near a water course, and never near the kitchen, but atleast an arrow-throw distance from it.

Now, this system of the ancients of having to go to a distance for calls of nature can easily be followed in our villages even in these days; but it is rather impossible in the towns, where according to our present mode of life every house has a privy of its own, and so the need to go out of the compound for calls of nature is obviated. Whether this is a change for the better or the worse is a matter of opinion; but the old system has many advantages of its own, which the modern system cannot claim; it taught people to be more energetic, gave them exercise in the morning whether they willed it or not. It, moreover, kept the house and premises neat and clean; and the necessity of setting apart a portion of it for the accumulation of filth did not arise. Nor was there any need for the costly systems of sanitation and drainage, and society was never under the old system compelled to set apart a section of the people for the degraded profession of scavenging. In fact, this is the greatest draw-back of the modern system.

When, therefore, we ponder over the advantages of the old system we find that its disadvantages are comparatively few, while its good points are many.

Spitting was not permitted in public places. The modern view is that Tuberculosis is spread in this way, the bacilli getting mixed up with dust and dirt might reach the lungs of the healthy and produce in them the disease.

According to Manu, "you should not discharge or throw urine, fæces, sputum into water and should not wash clothes soiled by urine or fæces, nor throw blood or poison in water. But the urine, fæces, sputum and offals should be thrown at a distance; so also washing and bathing should be done at a distance."

Napsu moothram pureeshamva samutsrijet amedyaliptam anyadva lohitamva vishanamva, dooradavasathat mootram dooratpadavasechanam ucchisthannam nishekam cha dooradeva samacharet.

Other instructions given in the Manu-Smriti to avoid epidemic infection are: (1) "Do not stay long in a village where people are uncharitable, that is, that do not provide the stranger with food and resting place at night, and where many are suffering from serious illness; do not wander on the public road alone, and do not stay long on top of hills."

Nadharmike vasetgrame na vyadhi bahule bhrisham, naikah prapadyeta dhwanam nachiram parvate vaset.

According to Sushruta "epidemics occur when the character of the season changes and medicinal herbs and water become impure. By their use epidemics of various sorts do arise. Hence use only pure water and pure herbs."

"Hence it is advised to quit the place at once." Tatra sthana parityagah.

(2) "Some times when smell of poisoned herbs and flowers is carried by wind to a country, people become affected by cough, asthma, vomiting, coryza, head-ache and fever." (Sushrut)

This exactly is the modern view also, how epidemics of

influenza (Flu) and hay-fever spread in a community. Under such circumstances also Sushruta advises – "Quit the place at once."

(3) "One who drinks water polluted with maggots, excreta, eggs and carcases, or covered with grass and vegetation, or drinks and bathes in flood water in the rainy season soon suffers from both external (skin) and internal (the bowels and the lungs) diseases." (Sushrut)

(4) "Water which is covered by weeds, mud, lotus-leaves and other leaves, and on which rays of the Sun and the Moon do not fall and which is accompanied by smell, taste and colour should be considered impure and disease-causing." (Sushru)

(5) "Impure water should always be avoided as it is disease-causing and unsuitable."

(6) "Impure or contaminated water should be purified by boiling, heating in Sun's rays, by quenching a red-hot iron ball or hot sand or stone in it." (Sushrut)

(7) Regarding ventilation and the need for fresh air the following is mentioned:

"Know the air as God, because it is omni-present, free and independent, life of all creation, movable and immovable, and respected by all." (Sushrut)

(8) "Fresh air increases health and longevity and should always be used." (Sushrut)

(9) "Do not belch or have a sigh or sneeze in a crowd without covering your mouth with the hand or something else." (Sushrut)

It is mentioned in the Devee-Bhagavat that the Ancients had knowledge of Bubonic Plague (Visphotak–Agni-rohini) and anticipated an outbreak of the disease, as we do to-day, whenever there was an unusual death-rate among rats and crows. Small-pox has also been known in India for centuries; and there is evidence to show that vaccination, though in a crude form, was practised in

ancient India, long before Jenner introduced modern Vaccination in 1796.

Lord Curzon at the opening of the King Institute of Preventive Medicine, Guindy, in 1905 said:

"It is also very probable that the ancient Hindus used animal vaccination secured by transmission of the small-pox virus through the cow; and this interesting theory is based on a quotation from a writing by Dhanvantari, the greatest of the ancient Hindu Physicians, which is so striking and so appropriate to the present occasion, that I must take the liberty of reading it to you. It is as follows:

"Take the fluid of the pock on the udder of the cow on the point of a lancet and lance with it the arms between the shoulders and the elbows until blood appears; then on mixing the fluid with the blood the fever of the small-pox will be produced."

"This is vaccination pure and simple. It would seem from it that Jenner's great discovery was actually fore-stalled by the ancient Hindus."

"The system of Quarantine as adopted in our days towards the prevention of the spread of these two diseases among the community, was perhaps more vigorously enforced by the ancient Hindus, and we have still a relic of it handed down to us; for, we observe similar rules of quarantine in the case of *ashouch* or Pollution (ಹೊಲೆ) either from death (mrit*a*shouch) or birth of a child (j*ata*shouch) When a person dies the rest of the family and their near-relatives have to observe certain restrictions for atleast a period of ten days; during which time they cannot take a shave from the barber, cannot send their clothes to the washerman, cannot mix or eat with any member of the public; these in their turn should not mix or eat with the inmates of the house, where the death took place.

"No eating is advised in the house of the deceased before atleast ten nights have elapsed since death" (Manu.)

After the prescribed period (of ten nights) is over the members should have a clean shave and have a full bath before they can come in contact with any outsider. Their clothing should be boiled or given to the washerman, who steams them while cleaning; and "all wooden articles and furniture should be properly scrubbed and washed clean and dried in the sun, or pared with the carpenter's adze."

Fumigation by the burning of incense and performance of a *homa* and *punyahavachanam* adds considerably to the value of the general disinfection thus effected.

After such purification, and only then, the inmates are allowed to mix and dine with the outsiders.

According to Manu, during the *ashouch* period one is forbidden even to give alms to beggars, and even in these days the Hindu, who is proverbially hospitable and charitable, does not give alms, when there is an illness in the house for fear of the disease spreading outside through the alms.

Incidentally, it must be said for the information of the reader, that giving of alms to the poor in case of any infectious disease in a house has lately been penalised in the City of Madras.

Two kinds of pollution are observed, we saw, one in the case of death and the other in the case of birth in a house.

Now, one can understand the value of these restrictions in the case of the first, where there is the question of some disease being the cause of death, the object of the restrictions being of course to prevent the spread of infection to the living; but why should quarantine be enforced at all in the latter case? With respect to this Manu declares: "The untouchability in the case of pollution of death is equal for all members of the family, while in the case of birth-pollution the mother only remains so for 10 days and the father becomes touchable after a full bath."

The aim of this is evidently to protect the mother from puerperal sepsis; that is, infection of the maternal passages after child-birth. The infection was evidently known to be conveyed from outside, and it is the modern view also, by the midwife carrying dirt in her hands under the uncut nails, and was traced to dust and dirt brought into the lying-in-room from outside by visitors, of whom there are often too many and of various sense of cleanliness, to a house where there has been a child-birth recently. This view is strengthened by the fact that in the work of Sushruta, we find the following reference to asepsis in Midwifery: "The bed must be made comfortable with pillows, clean, soft and broad, the patient should lie quiet on the back with hips folded. Four elderly women and reliable (of undoubted character) who are expert midwives, and who should have their *nails pared to the quick* (*kartita nakhah*) should be in attendance on the woman during labour."

Again, while speaking of the removal of the retained placenta (or the after-birth) Sushruta insists on the finger-nails being cut close and fingers dipped in ghee or oil before introduction into the womb.

This idea of the Ancients is, it must be said, in full accord with the teachings of Modern Midwifery, and even medical students know how scrupulous cleanliness of the hands with finger-nails pared to the quick is insisted upon in the practice of Surgery and more so in Midwifery.

It may not be out of place to make mention here that the rite of *Kshipra Pumsavana* – a ceremony for securing painless delivery at full term – performed at a certain stage of pregnancy is a form of auto-suggestion meant to quiet a nervous mind. What the West adopts now, for lessening the travail of child-birth when labour has set in, is the induction of "twilight sleep" by the administration of deliriants.

Certain rules to be observed by the pregnant woman have been mentioned by Yajnavalkya; they are:

"A pregnant woman should avoid riding on elephants and horses, mountaineering or going up high staircase, as well as violent exercises, quick movements (or running), and driving in carriages. She should avoid grief, blood-letting, agitation and worry, cock – posture (*kukkootasan* or squatting posture), much work, sleeping by day, or keeping awake at night. So also crossing rivers (by boats or by swimming). After Pumsavana (which is generally performed when the mother has felt the foetal movements, which is the case usually about the 18th week of pregnancy) she must avoid pungent and strong drugs, alkalis, coition and raising or carrying heavy loads."

Other instructions given are: "she should not be fluttered in mind . . . . should avoid quarrel, yawning and stretching of body . . . . . . she should be without jealousy . . . . . she should always be cheerful . . . . A woman should always be peaceful, especially the pregnant woman. The son of such a woman would have good behaviour, long life and intelligence, otherwise there is danger of abortion."

These instructions, it must be pointed out, are in all respects similar to those given in any modern text – book on Obstetrics, and one wonders if the ancient Seers could have forestalled them by their power of trikalajnana.

The Hindus of ancient India, then, may be said to have had a fairly well-developed sense of sanitation; they considered the Ayurveda not only as the science for the cure of diseaee, but one concerned with the preservation of the health of the healthy as well.

Vyadhi upasristhanam vyadhi parimokshah, swasthasya swasthya rakshanam.

And the Ayurveda lays down certain regulations by which one can keep himself free from disease and can live a healthy long life. These regulations, it was pointed

out above, have been incorporated in the canons or codes of the ancient Law-givers – Manu, Yajnavalkya and Parashara, but in the garb of religion, so that they may be faithfully followed and without question or scepticism even by the common folk for fear of committing sin from their non-observance.

It is worth-while repeating here to the credit of the Ayurveda, that most of the principles of that great Science, ancient as it is, still compare very favourably indeed with the teachings of Modern Medicine and Hygiene; it cannot be otherwise, for the accredited origin of that Science, the Ayurveda, is no doubt Divine.

2

Continues Manu: "After the calls of nature the soiled parts should be cleaned of the twelve bodily impurities by means of clay (mrittika) and water. The clay selected for this purpose should be clean; and earth thrown out by white-ants, rats and mice, earth having insects in it, and earth that is taken from under water should be avoided." (Being unclean they are apt to cause sepsis when rubbed on the body).

"The teeth should be brushed with a twig of the following plants: Date – palm, Palasha (*butea frondosa*), Kadambam, (*anthocephalus cadamba*), Karanje (*pongamia glabra*), fig, banian (*vata*), Bael, *Apamarga*, Bambu, Babul Mango and Neem (*azadirachta Indica*). Cashew leaves and sticks are equally good for the teeth, but no mention is made of them in the Smrities, as the tree seems to have been introduced into India from Africa for the first time by the Portuguese about 1500 A D.

The end of the twig is bitten into a brush and used as such. The brush does serve not only mechanically to remove the tartar, but being acid, astringent or bitter does chemically dissolve or loosen the tartar from even the

innermost recesses between the teeth, the bleeding from the gums is stopped and the teeth bleached. Teeth discoloured by tobacco and betel leaf and nut are easily bleached by most of these twigs if used daily.

The action of the twig-brush is similar to that of the modern tooth-brush used with some form of dentifrice. One disadvantage there is, however, of the tooth-brush, namely, the brush once used remains a source of re-infection at its subsequent use and has, therefore, to be kept in some sort of antiseptic solution; while the twigs can be thrown away after one use; the twig is, moreover, available anywhere, fresh and of variety.

Now, cleanliness of the mouth is of special importance in our country. Pyorrhœa alveolaris (or flow of pus from the sockets of the teeth) is a common affection in the tropics and not infrequently results from neglected dental hygiene. The teeth should be thoroughly cleaned with a brush of some sort. Any part of the teeth where food constantly lodges is likely to decay sooner or later, as the food ferments giving rise to acidity, which has a corrosive action on the enamel and dentine of the teeth and leads to dental caries. Hence it is necessary that scrupulous cleanliness of the teeth should be observed.

During the plucking of the twigs the following *Mantras* have to be uttered:

Ayuh balam yasho varchah prajna pashur vasoonicha,
Brahmaprajnam cha medhamcha twam no dehi vanaspate.

"O Lord of the Forest, give us long life, strength, fame, lustre, progeny, cattle, riches too. Give us, O Lord, Supreme Wisdom-Divine, memory and intellect."

A true Hindu will not heedlessly injure even the lowest object of God's creation having life. To him a tree is as much a manifestation of the Divine Wisdom and Power as man himself; and the Devas engaged in the building up of a flower or leaf love their creation with

much fond regard as "the artist who paints his picture does the semblance."

The man who through thoughtlessness or ignorance injures these divine works incurs the displeasure of these elemental workers. Hence the Hindu in plucking a flower or twig prays to the Supreme Being and asks the permission of the industrious ones who have made it. By the very fact that he recognises their labour and appreciates their actions, he propitiates the Sylvan gods and gets their good-will and blessing.

According to Manu: "The early-morning bath should necessarily be brief; but if the person is not in good health, he need not have the morning bath, but may content himself with a mid-day one. Every Grihastha is required to bathe twice. The early-morning bath should be done before the Sun rises, i. e., when the Eastern sky is tinged with the dim rays of the rising Sun. Persons in ill-health need not take a head-bath, but wash the body and face, or have a sponging with a wet cloth.

"The morning bath from its very nature must be quickly and briefly done; no oil should be used. Flowing water is the best for baths; in its absence tank or well water may be used. The least is water stored in vessels and used after a time (as it becomes very chill).

"For cleansing the body clay (removed from particular sources as mentioned above) is again mentioned. The rubbing should be done with the repetition of the following *Mantras*, which mean:

"By horses trod, by chariots charged, O Earth,
By Vishnu's step encased, Remove my sins,
O, Mrittike, Whatever ill-deeds I may have done.
From Primeval Ocean vast uplifted by Krishna, hundred-armed boar,
Salutation to thee, the producer of all creatures and of good deeds.
O, pervade all my body and free me from all sins."

In place of clay powdered pulse (green-gram) is also mentioned.

Now, powdered pulse effectively cleanses the skin, has a bland action on it and tends to wash away the fatty secretions of the body quite as well as soap. But no mention is made of soap in the Smritis, as soap is of course a much later discovery.

But soap is a far better subtitute to these, it is a good disinfectant, has an emollient action on the skin, has in solution great penetrating properties, so that it can reach the minute pores of the sweat-glands and bring out from them the fatty secretion with dead epithelium.

There may, however, be an objection to the use of soap on the ground that it is prepared from the action of an alkali on animal fat. True, most soaps may be prepared in that way, but an equally good soap can be made from vegetable oils as well. And most of the toilet soaps are prepared from vegetable oils only, like olive oil, cocoanut oil, ground-nut oil, dhoop oil and red palm-oil (the oil only is red, not the palm).

Thus, the Hindu ever accustomed to look at the outside world as the symbol or reflection of the inner, can be said to have joined to his outer ablutions the idea of inner purification. As he washes the outer body he repeats certain Mantras for the purification of the inner bodies and thus weaves his religion into the commonest incidents of daily life.

3

Cleanliness

Most of the ancient religions gave a prominent place to cleanliness, and in some of them it acquired a definite relationship to disease. The followers of Zoroaster could not travel by sea very conveniently, they were forbidden to defile the sea under penalty. Women were held "unclean"

under a variety of circumstances, as at menstrual periods or at child birth, which were occasions requiring unusual precautions in order to recover cleanliness after these physiological processes. Even to this day the Parsi home sets apart a room for the monthly seclusion of women.

Among the Greeks marriage was preceded by a ritual of purification, and the "marriage bath" was one of the most essential items in the wedding-rites. Death and dead bodies produced uncleanness that required purification by "water, fire and smoke."

The evolution of the idea of cleanliness reached an important hygienic stage with the Hebrews. While its objective was religious, we now find that the Hebrew ritual afforded equally essential protection from dangers of disease. It is said that the Book of Leviticus contains a remarkable collection of sanitary regulations. The minute directions regarding foods that were considered unclean have greater significance than their religious purpose. The purification of the woman after child birth may be easily interpreted as a sanitary measure, if consideration is given to what was required of an uuclean person. The ritual with reference to leprosy presents the most striking example of a combined religious and hygienic application of the idea of cleanliness. It reads almost like the work of the modern Health Officer. It sets a standard of biological cleanliness, which sanitarians are still struggling to attain.

The prominent place accorded to bathing in certain religions has been responsible for the establishment of cleanliness as an important factor in life. While much of our bathing is done for other reasons than health the results of a clean actively functioning skin are well recognised values.

The most significant step in the evolution of our modern idea of cleanliness arose out of the establishment of the true relationship of filth and dirt to disease. In

earlier times dirt was considered not only the vehicle but the actual generator of disease. Dust was so frequently associated with pestilence that it was thought to be dangerous and so was dreaded. But we have now learnt that dirt is not dangerous, because it is "of the earth earthy" but only because it may act as a vehicle for maintenance or distribution of living microbes of disease.

The psychological relationship of cleanliness is of significance. The association of cleanliness with beauty led to a new interest in bathing as an adjunct to feminine charm. At first it was considered somewhat beneath the male, but its general acceptance by both sexes has come with the realisation of the value of the feeling of well-being resulting from bodily cleanliness.

Cleanliness is not merely an æsthetic adornment though doubtless an acquired taste. It is above all a sanitary safeguard, the importance of which has been learnt by hard experience. In other words, to be clean is in a large measure to be safe from infectious disease; and cleanliness applies not only to the person but extends also to the personal environment.

The feeling of well-being produced by a satisfactory bath after work involving soiling of the body by dirt or perspiration is well known. This effect is more than a mere mechanical removal of extraneous materials, it means definitely improved functioning of the entire system.

Cleanliness of clothes produces a favourable psychological effect upon the average individual, and even the most phlegmatic individual (*tamasic*) has his feeling and tone improved by clean clothing, though he may get apparent joy from a dirty one.

Environmental cleanliness is a highly important factor in satisfaction. This is especially true when food is related to the idea of uncleanliness. Any suggestion of dirt connected with food or food-stuff brings almost a universal

dissatisfaction, disgust and vomiting. The same results if cooking vessels are also unclean. Most of these emotional reactions are unsound.

It is to biological cleanliness or freedom from bacteria that health owes its greatest debt. As living microbes, as is well known, are the real causes of disease, freedom from these means freedom from disease.

The cleanliness of personal environment has equally great hygienic value. No one should use the common drinking cup as there may be "many a germ betwixt the cup and the lip." Contaminated water and infected milk should be excluded, or rendered clean and free from bacteria as by boiling before use. Purification by cooking is one of the greatest sanitary advances ever made by man and is the only means of rendering a food safe for consumstion.

Personal cleanliness is as important as the cleanliness of our houses, streets and places of resort. The public should be convinced of the usefulness of cleanly surroundings. This can be accomplished by proper instruction of children and adults in the technic of cleanliness based upon proper knowledge, and the knowledge should be translated into habits.

Habits of Cleanliness. Cleanliness is largely a matter of habit and is a desirable quality. Habits of cleanliness may be acquired by the passive influence exerted upon individuals by a clean environment. Children and adults forced to live constantly in unclean surroundings seldom maintain a high standard of personal cleanliness, and the first step in a proper set for the desired quality is to provide a satisfactory environment. Of equal importance with the environment are the examples set by the associates of the individual. Clean habits by the adult members of a household make greater impression on the child than all precept and advice.

Active participation is the other factor in habit-formation. If the individual can be convinced of the benefits of cleanliness, and induced to apply them thoughtfully and sufficiently often, then habit will be established, and once established it becomes his second nature and will be a valuable guide all through his life in protection from disease.

Bathing. Throughout history and in most religions bathing has had a place as a sacred rite. Oriental religions particularly of the warm climates have incorporated bathing in their religious ceremonies.

Rome was noted for her gorgeous baths conducted in a manner that became an impossible luxury. The practice of bathing declined, they say, among the early Xians because purification of the body was considered to be detrimental to the development of the soul. The revival of the popularity of the bath came through the discovery of the court-beauties that cleanliness and beauty seemed to have a causal relation with all kinds of devices and materials to aid in cleanliness.

Washing the hands and feet before saying prayers or before meals has no doubt its origin on the hygienic effect of keeping the hands and nails clean. Biting the nails is, of course, an uncleanly habit and particularly dangerous in the tropics, as intestinal infections such as hook-worms, round and thread worms, cholera, dysentery are very likely to be carried in this manner.

In the Tropics especially there is a constant danger of contracting some forms of skin-disease—such as dhobi-itch and barber's itch—through clothing, hair-combs, shaving razors and shaving brushes. Each man must have his own shaving set and should not depend upon the barber however clean his kit be. Soap should always be used for a shave as soap is a good disinfectant and prevents conveyance of skin disease and even the syphilitic poison.

Exercise

The maintenance of health in the normal organism is determined largely by the proper relation of the two great factors—activity and rest; and exercise taken with due regard to the individual requirements of age, sex, occupation and capacity helps not only in maintaining health but is a valuable adjunct to recovery from disease.

A moderate amount of exercise is, therefore, necessary if the body is to be properly developed in youth and maintained in a healthy state all through one's life-time. Many of the ailments of people leading sedentary lives are mostly due to neglect of physical exercise, and no amount of care in dieting or drugging will sufficiently make up the deficiency.

Nothing in the field of Hygiene has been more definitely established than the fact that muscular exercise is essential to health; and the general advice given is that every normal individual should take regular exercise, vigorous and general enough to involve the use of the large muscles of the trunk and limbs, and pursued far enough to induce perspiration and stimulate circulation and respiration.

Exercise compels increased depth and rate of respiration, and the result is more effective oxygenation of the blood, increased elimination of CO_2 and increased O supply to the tissues. By deep breathing the blood is well oxygenated. The respiratory movements and particularly those of the diaphragm act on the abdominal circulation, and when respiration is deepened by exercise a far more active circulation is maintained in all the organs of the body including the bowels, which are thus massaged as it were, and constipation is thereby prevented.

Exercise increases tissue activities and heat production and stimulates the utilisation of nutrition from food and indirectly the appetite; and the increased circulation and elimination brought about by exercise influence the

life of nerve cells and also improve the control of nervous and mental functions. This is a highly important factor in solving the difficult problem relating to nervous control and sufficiently well explains the benefits of Yogic Asanas, of Pranayama and Soorya Namaskars of the Hindus. Hence suitable exercise does not only improve the body but the mind also, the brain becomes alert and active; and given a good intellect the man who comes to prominence in life is the man possessed of most endurance, one who can get on in life with perhaps less sleep and ean do harder mental work and for more hours at a stretch.

This is an important economic health principle to be remembered by students and businessmen alike.

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CHAPTER III

THE HINDU DIETARY

The Hindu dietary is largely founded on economic principles, but from long experience of climatic conditions, religious and social customs and from the fact that nature yields abundance of vegetable food without much of exertion, came to be mainly vegetarian. It appears to have reached perfection even in the days of the Ayurveda, which recognised that "food is the source of growth, strength, health, colour (as opposed to pallor from want of blood) and contentment; it is the cause of ill-health also when taken injudiciously."

Brahmaderapi lokasya aharah sthiti utpatti vinashahetuh aharat eva abhivriddhih balam arogyam varna indriya prasada-scha tatha ahara vaishamyat aswasthyam.

The Ayurveda also recognised that "Physicians who are ignorant of the properties and proper use of food-materials are not able to keep people fit and prevent disease."

The importance of a wholesome diet in the treatment of disease in preference even to drugs was also recognised. Thus, *Pathye-sati gadarthasya kimaushadha nishevanam– Pathye-asati gadarthasya kimaushadha nishevanam.*

"When the patient is on proper diet, what is the *need* for medicine? When he is not on proper diet what is the *use* of medicine?"

The importance of a well-balanced diet and of variety for the maintenance of perfect health and freedom from disease, was also recognised; and so the diet came to consist mainly of cereals and grains, tubers and roots, nuts, fruits and vegetables, oils, milk and milk-products (like curds (*dadhi*) butter and ghee, and butter-milk) – all in

proper quantity and proportions, and in a palatable, easily digestible and assimilable form. Common salt or rock-salt, and the rest of the *shadrasas* (the six-tastes) were the necessary accessories. Curds or butter-milk usually formed the last course of dinner, and fruits and betel the desserts after food.

The value of cow's milk as a perfect and easily digestible food for adults and invalids, as a sole diet for infants and growing children for a considerable length of time, and as a food that aids the digestion of other proteins combined with it, was also evidently known, as is proved by the innumerable forms of *khadya* and invalid foods mentioned in the *A*yurveda, in most of which milk and its products form the chief ingredients.

With this object the Hindu reared the cow, and held her in great reverence as the Kama–Dhenu (the yielder of one's desires). And milk was known as *payah* or Amritam (life–giver); and its combination with curds, ghee, sugar and honey formed the *Panchamrit* (the five life–giving principles) in common use in Hindu rituals.

The Grihastha (the house–holder) would not fail to set apart a handful of cooked food for his cow–*gograsa*–before he eats. He ate his food in pleasurable surroundings as in the company of a friend or guest (*Atithi*). His rule (of the table) at dinner was *hita-bhuk, mita-bhuk* and *kala-bhuk;* that is, he ate whatever is agreeable, ate moderately and at the proper time or hour of the day, *kale bhojanam* Atreyah.

"Overeating goes against health, long life and the attainment of *swarga* and *punya*" says Manu, "and is disapproved by the world; it should therefore be avoided."

As to the desirability of pleasurable surroundings during dinner, Manu has also the following:

"Having washed, the twice-born should eat food always with a pleasant (collected) mind; after eating he should rinse his mouth well and touch the *indriyas* also with water."

Now, the *Atithi* is not necessarily a friend or an invited guest, he may arrive any time of the day or night, there is no fixed time at which he may arrive. Nobody, friend or foe, coming to a Hindu's door at any time of the day or night for food and shelter, should be denied courtesy and hospitality (*satkara, atithya*) due to him, on the principle: *chettuh parshwagatam chhayam nopasamharate drumah*, "The tree does not of course withdraw its shade or shelter even from him that approaches it for felling it."

In fact the *Atithi* is virtually a Devat*a* in human form coming to one's door to test one's sincerity of faith and devotion. He should not, therefore, be allowed to go unattended to and disappointed (*bhagnashah*) or dissatisfied, as this is considered an act of *Adharma* or sin. "None should be denied a place of rest."

nakanchana vasatau pratyapaksheeta. (Tait. Up.)

Atithi-satkara therefore comes under the heading of the *Ahnika* or daily duties of the Hindus, and is a *nitya-karma* (obligatory or religious rite).

Now, when milk is converted into *dadhi* (curds), the milk-sugar (lactose) becomes converted into lactic acid; and the medicinal properties of the lactic acid in the treatment of certain intestinal disorders, like colitis, dysentery, enteritis and fermentative diarrhœa of the nature of sprue, have long been known to the Hindus evidently, as curds (rather butter-milk) formed the essential diet in such diseases. It is only lately, however, that western scientists have explained this view of the ancient Hindus; and according to Prof. Metchnikoff, the action of the lactic acid is on the fermentative bacteria in the intestines, especially B-Coli, and is therefore a beneficial one; so much so, that Bulgarian milk (Koumiss, fermented mare's milk) was once regarded as a panacea for all human ills, and that its daily use tended towards longevity. Butter-milk thus came to be used by western physicians in the

dietetic treatment of sprue, colitis, fermentative diarrhœa, constipation, gout, arterio-sclerosis (or pipe-stem arteries associated with high blood-pressure) and some forms of skin disease and erysipelas, the last four diseases being brought about by intestinal toxæmia.

In the *Ayurveda* butter-milk is also spoken of in the same strain:

yatha suranam amritam pradhanam tatha naranam bhuvi takramahuh, natakra dagdhah prabhavanti rogah natakra sevee vyathate kadachit.

"Just as *amrita* is indispensable for the gods in heaven so is butter-milk for men on earth; no disease under the scorching effect of butter-milk shall augment or grow worse; nor does one that uses butter-milk everyday suffer from disease whatever". (Saligrama nighantu)

Even the vitamins, which were discovered by Modern Science only about three decades ago, were not quite unknown to the Hindus. They had known by experience about the existence of these food-elements and their importance to good health and vigour, although they were not able to demonstrate their chemical nature now made possible by modern means. The use of germinated (sprouted) green gram (*mung*) and the tender greens of *Agasthi* (*sesbania grandiflora*) and *ekpani* (one-leafed shrub, *hydrocotyle Asiatica*, *uraga*, *brahmi*, *mandookaparni* (Sams), ondalai (Can), timire (Tulu) *vallari* (Tam), *kodangat* (Mal.) *Saraswati-akulu* (Tel.) has long been prevalent among the Hindus as the most essential pick-me-up for the lassitude of the previous day's fast as of *Ekadasi*. So also the use of leavened preparations like *iddalis*, *hittoos kadabu* and *surnalis* and other varieties of sponge-cakes in our daily use. Ekpani is an excellent nervine tonic.

The destructive effects on vitamins, especially Vit. C. of cooking, canning or otherwise preserving fruits and vegetables, were also known evidently to the ancients, and

some part of fruits, nuts, tubers and vegetables were taken raw, rather "unfired"-as salads and *pachadis* as is the modern vogue especially with the vitamin-faddists.

Now, Vit. C is usually contained in sprouted grains, fruits and fresh green vegetables. It has lately been discovered that the common Indian gooseberry (*phyllanthus emblica, Avla, Amalaka, Dhatree, Nellikai*) contains maximum amount of Vit. C, bulk for bulk, of all fruits including oranges and lemons, and that this vitamin is not much affected by storage and various methods of preparation and conservation. Avla is perhaps the richest natural store of Vit. C known in an edible form, the fresh juice containing nearly 20 to 30 times as much Vit. C as orange-juice; a single fruit is thus equivalent in Vit. C-contents to one or two large oranges. Avla has been long included in *A*yurvedic medicine, as a tonic (ras*a*yana). Fresh Avla was found to be most effective against scurvy, when an outbreak of this disease occurred in 1940 in the Hissar Famine Area. Avla fruit and the tree-wood was among the important ingredients in the K*a*ya-kalpa treatment undergone by Pundit M*a*laviy*a*ji of Benares a few years ago.

There is no doubt, then, that most of the basic principles on which modern dietetics is founded were known to the Hindus. And Chevers, the pioneer Surgeon of Calcutta, well-known as the author of a monumental work on Indian Medical Jurisprudence, wrote exactly a century ago about the dietary of the Hindus as follows: "It is certain that the Law-givers who prescribed for the people of India a diet consisting mainly of vegetable food and water, the lighter kinds of animal food, such as fish, pigeons and goat's flesh being only occasionally introduced and in moderate quantity, judged almost as physiologically as they could have done had they studied at the feet of Liebig and Prout."

The Hindu's classification of food from point of view

of spiritual practice and development is founded on the theory of *Trigunas* or the three dispositions-*Sattwam* or goodness, *Rajas* or passion and *Tamas* or dullness-and on the principle that "the faith of every man is in accordance with his natural disposition"—*Sattwanuroopa sarvasya shraddha bhavati Bharata.* (Gita XVII. 3) "Foods that are sweet, fatty, nourishing and agreeable help in promoting Sattwa-guna, and promote longevity, vitality, strength and health. Foods that are bitter, sour, salted or overhot, dry and burning (or thirst-producing) promote the Rajo-guna; these foods are said to cause grief, pain and disease. Food that is not freshly cooked or cooked overnight, which is tasteless, putrid and stale, which is of the leaving or offal and which is unclean-such foods promote the Tamo-guna, and should be avoided. (Gita, XVII. 7-10).

"The Trigunas are the primary constituents of *Prakriti* and are the bases of all substances; they bind fast in the body "the indestructible embodied one", namely, the Self; of these Sattwam, from its stainlessness luminous and free from evil, binds by attachment to Happiness and to Knowledge; that is to say, it binds the Self by the consciousness of happiness and knowledge in the shape of "I am happy," "I am wise" through *Avidya*.

Rajas is of the nature of passion giving rise to desire and attachment, it binds fast the Self by attachment to action. Tamas is born of ignorance, causing delusion or non-discrimination. It binds fast to the Self by miscomprehension, indolence and sleep. Thus, Sattwam attaches to happiness, Rajas to action, while Tamas shrouding or veiling discrimination attaches to miscomprehension. Again, when through every sense (or gateway of perception) the light of intelligence shines, then Sattwam can be said to be predominant. Greed, activity, unrest (or agitation with joy), longing-these arise when Rajas is predominant; and darkness (or absence of discrimination) and its results (inert-

ness, miscomprehension and delusion) do arise when Tamas is predominant. (Gita, XIV, 5 to 13).

Hence, Says the Gita (VI. 17), *yuktahara viharasya yukta chestasya karmasu yukta swapnava bodhasya yogo bhavati duhkhaha*. "To him who is temperate in eating and recreation, in his effort for work, and in sleep and wakefulness, Yoga becomes the destroyer of misery".

Now according as they promote either Rajas or Tamas certain articles of food have been tabooed from the Hindu dietary, such as animal foods like meat, fish and eggs, and also spices and condiments like chillies, onions, garlic, asafaetida, etc. Animal food is tabooed also as its preparation involves *himsa* or killing of God's creatures. Spices are powerful stimulants and excitants of emotions, lust and passion; and whatever may be their medicinal value in the treatment of actual disease, their daily use is not advised, they being unnecessary stimulants, sexual excitants and injurious to the digestive organs, and also obnoxious and creators of "liqour-thirst."

It will be shown elsewhere in these pages that highly-spiced meat-dishes tend to produce an abnormal thirst which requires something "stronger than water" to quench, and that the free use of condiments intensifies the stimulating effects of the "extractives" contained in meat, which are themselves, apart from their accompaniments, stimulating to a good extent.

Generally speaking, nations consuming large quantities of meat as food are, as a rule, noted for an excessive consumption of alcoholic liqours, as the craving for alcohol can be overcome only with a meat diet; whereas, the craving loses its hold on the victim when a non-stimulating bland diet (*sattwik* diet) consisting of cereals, milk, fruits, nuts and green vegetables is adopted.

As a rule bodily activities are very much reduced in the tropics, and the digestive functions are undoubtedly

not so vigorous as in the cold and temperate climates. It is from this consideration also that the Hindus should have formulated their dietary. The European coming out to tropical countries cannot easily give up his original dietary habits of a temperate climate, but continues to use a high protein diet, consisting mostly of meats he was accustomed to, which is apt to leave a small fæcal residue; this combined with the lesser tonicity of the intestinal musculature consequent on the tropical heat (with its enervating effect) tends to produce constipation and intestinal toxæmia; sometimes mental disturbances like insomnia and tropical neurasthenia result, necessitating an early "return home." And if with this form of dietary alcohol is also used, a tendency for sprue, dysentery with its sequela (tropical abscess of the liver), neurasthenia and anæmia devolops, leading to a condition of permanent invalidism through the rest of life.

Certain food articles like potatœs and papaya are objected to by orthodox Hindus, so also chillies. One is not sure on what grounds they are objected to; maybe, they are apt to develop Rajas or Tamas, but of which too one cannot be sure either; a possible explanation is that being foreign (*mlecha**) introductons into India by the Spanish and the Portuguese only about 1500 A. D., the Hindus were not inclined to adopt them in their dietary.

But cashew fruits and pine-apples are also foreign, yet they are commonly the Hindu's favourites. The only plausible explanation seems to be then that the Hindu will not usually adopt anything in his diet which is not sanctioned by or which is prohibited by the Smritis; and these later introductions of course, have not been mentioned in them.

Now, potato is a tuber (*kandamul*), contains starch in abundance but proteins in small quantity only, a large amount of Vit. C and salts of Calcium and Potassium and

Note: * *Mlecha* means a jungle-dweller or heathen.

Phosphorus; it also yields more Vit. B and Iron than milled cereals. As an article of diet potato is therefore recommended to replace part of the starch of highly-milled cereals in a diet. It is easily digestible, bland and not likely to excite emotions or passions in man and is therefore a *Sattwik* food, to which no Smritis can object.

One disadvantage, however, is mentioned that potatoes are not suited to constitute the staple diet of man, they are much too bulky and contain too little protein in proportion to their starch; and if one should live on potatoes alone, about 6 lbs. of them may be required for his daily requirements of energy. This quantity is of course unduly bulky, weighing as it does about three times as much as an ordinary mixed diet. The result of the continued use of such diet will be undue burdening of the stomach and the bowels, producing dyspepsia, dilatation of the stomach, and diarrhœa. The so-called "potato-belly" of the Irish peasant is an example of such a result.

This latter, however, is no sign of Tamas, and the Irish wit is proverbial.

Papaya contains in addition to about 12 p. c. sugars and traces of protein, lare amounts of Vit. A and Vit. C. It is a good laxative and is useful in cases of piles. It can be given even to children both in health and disease. It is the most economic of the tropical fruits and is easily grown. The unripe fruit can also be used as an article of diet; the rind contains a digestive ferment–papain–allied to pepsin of the gastric juice and capable of digesting protein matter. For medicinal use papain is a good substitute to *pepsini porci*, which being extracted from the stomach-lining of the pig is highly objected to both by Hindus and Moslems as well. Papaya is easily grown and does not require particular care; within 10 months from the sowing of the seed one can have a ripe fruit or fruits. Its cultivation should therefore be encouraged especially in these days of famine and malnutrition.

One important consideration why certain foodstuffs-like onions, cabbages, carrots and radishes - are not usually eaten by the Hindus is the objectionable odour that they emit while being eliminated from the system, and also the tendency of certain others—as some varieties of beans, tubers like alocasia, and mushrooms, (which is purely a vegetable growth)–is that they are apt to produce poisonous or allergic symptoms especially in those with an idiosyncracy.

Though not easily intelligible to the modern mind there is no denying that the Triguna theory is founded on a rational basis, and that its conclusions at any rate are in perfect accord with the teachings of modern Medicine and Hygiene.

Now the Hindu, we have seen, is prevented by his religious customs from eating various kinds of food. What authority there is in religion for these prohibitions, it is difficult to know, when the Kashmiri Brahmins can eat meat, the Bengalis fish, the Kshatriyas all kinds of non-vegetarian food except beef, and yet remain *orthodox*. In any case food is presumably a matter for the medical science and not for religion. And yet the Hindus would deny medicine its sphere and allow religious customs to dictate what they should eat. One of the most important things done in India in recent times was the experiment conducted under Government auspices on the nutritive value of the food eaten in different parts of India. What the experiment proved is that the food eaten by the Hindus in what may be described as the orthodox areas of Hinduism, Bengal and Madras, had not sufficient nutritive value. No wonder that Dr. Moonje, the champion of militant Hinduism, is never tired of emphasising the necessity of a scientific re-arrangement of Hindu dietary as a preliminary to all reforms.

The Drink-Evil

There can be no question that the Ancients had known of the hilarious effects of intoxicating drinks, and they regarded them as "a means of drowning cares and stimulating dullness into wild joy divinely bestowed upon man". They drank them solemnly in their religious feasts and offered to their gods also. Thus, we read of Indra, the Heaven-God of the Hindus, reeling drunk with the libations of the sacred Soma-juice offered by his devotees, and in later periods of the Greeks singing in bacchanal processions the praises of Dionysos, who made the whole world happy by his "care-dispelling" juice of the grapes.

The juice of the Soma-plant was a favourite drink of the early Aryan settlers of India centuries before the Christian Era.

What exactly was the Soma-plant is not known, though a number of plants such as cannabis Indica, ephedra vulgaris, asclepias acida have been suggested by Chopra.

But even at such early days there seems to have arisen an opposite doctrine, and the guardians of religion sensible to the evils of intoxicants proclaimed not only that excess in them was unworthy and hateful, but even the mere tasting of them was a Sin. The Brahmins, although the libations of the sacred Soma still remains a tradition among the Hindu religious rites, pronounce drinking of liquor or habitual use of any intoxicants as one of the Five Great Sins. Even in the old rival religion of Buddhism one of the precepts or commandments that the new adept promises to obey is that forbidding the use of intoxicants of all sorts. The religion of Mahammad, though in a large measure the outcome of the religions of the Jews and Xians cast off the ancient sacredness of wine and forbade its use as an "abomination" (*Haraam*). Infact, there is no religion which permits the use of intoxicant drinks or drugs.

Nevertheless distilled spirits were known early in the

East but came into use among the western nations about the Middle Ages and spread rapidly among them being considered the "water of life" (or aqua vitæ, as the modern word "whisky" indicates) so much so their employment as a habitual stimulant is to day perhaps the greatest evil prevailing among the civilised nations of the world, bringing about in the lower strata of the population a state of physical and moral degradation hardly parallelled in the worst ages of History.

India has been the home of temperance from time immemorial as her principal religions and codes of Ethics all taught temperance not only in the matter of alcohol but of all kinds of intoxicants. But today we see drink has become the commonest evil of our Country, and exists not so much among the unlettered villagers (among whom liqour-taking is a social stigma) as among the industrial workers and the so called educated societies in towns and cities. The labourers took it in the absence of a recreation after the hard day's toil, whereas among the educated and well-to-do classes it was regarded as an instrument of "good fellowship".

This "good fellowship in the beginning leads to bad citizenship" in the end; and the formal "good luck and good health" wished each other at socials generally ends in ill-luck and ill-health. To such a deadly evil the golden advice applies, "Touch not, taste not, handle not. Truly wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Medical opinion has never been more unanimous in respect of the drink-evil.

The only way to get rid of this enemy is to cut the drink squarely off and to adopt a simple non-meat diet consisting of cereals, nuts, fruits, vegetables, milk etc. It is said that the free use of fruits brings the system back to a new condition of health in which the old appetite can be entirely cast off. Moral strength is, however, required

for this purpose, and nothing brings it like Prayer and submission to the Divine Will, as He alone can come to the rescue of the fallen victim and no human being can.

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CHAPTER IV

THE HINDU IDEALS OF MARRIAGE

Marriage to a Hindu is not a contract, but a sacred trust, a re-union of the two Souls; the two Souls actually unite to fulfil the ideal of life and prepare themselves as "pilgrims" of the Jiva-*yatra*, to realise the fullest spirituality. One cannot surpass the other; in all their social functions the husband and wife are equal partners, the wife being known as the *Ardhangi* of the husband. The moment a man and a woman unite in marriage, separation ceases for ever, for good or evil they are one. In the marriage ceremony each says "Let my heart be thy heart, let thine be mine" in the presence of the Sacred Fire (Agni-*s*akshi); next they both watch the Polar Star–Dhruva, the symbol of "constancy and faithfulness." They thus form one Soul, even death cannot separate them.

Now, *Sati* or *Sahagaman* was not a forced thing as we read. It was the ideal of one-ness. The Hindu woman never cared to live apart from her husband. Body meant nothing, it may encase the Soul for the time being, but that is all; and Death is nothing beside eternity with the husband.

"Life of my life, Death's bitter sword,
Hath severed us like a broken wood,
Rent us in twain who are but one.
Shall the flesh survive when the Soul is gone?"

"It was a splendid courage and a beautiful faith" says Edwin Arnold, "that inspired these Indian wives." "Witness that I die for my Beloved by his side" was the farewell of the *Sati*.

Even now we sometimes hear of women going to *Sati* inspite of legal prohibition. But whether seek *Sati* or not, the ideal Hindu woman remains the same, and she carries the memory of her husband, and husband alone, all through her life. This heroic devotion abounds in all our history and is the legacy of the Hindu woman to-day.

It is the Hindu woman that has kept the torch of Spirituality alight in our Country all these years, she is still keeping it alight now. India's torch is burning, "burning in the bush as Moses saw it," as well as in our homes.

* * * *

Certain questions regarding marriage in this Country especially deserve our attention from both hygienic and economic considerations, as they relate mostly to our present social customs, such as Infant-betrothal, Infant-marriage and marriage among blood-relations and *sagotras*. These, however, are forbidden (*nishedha*) by Manu and other Law-givers of the Hindus. Luckily, the first two are things of the past, since the passing of the Child-Marriage Restraint Act of 1928 – The Sarda Act – by which no person, if a male under 18 years of age, and if a female under 14 years, can contract a valid marriage.

A. **Infant – Betrothal.**

The disadvantage of this is that not only are the parties to the marriage disposed of without being themselves consulted, but in the long interval between the betrothal and the actual consummation anything is possible, and disease or other circumstances might render one or other of the parties quite unsuited to married life; more-

over, consummation of the marriage at a very early age is also encouraged by the practice, and if the girl becomes a widow religion demands that she be condemned to perpetual celibacy all through her life.

B. Early - Marriage.

From a purely physiological point of view also early marriage is to be condemned for the reason, that sexual indulgence in either sex before their physical development is complete is disastrous to health. It causes lack of manliness and vigour in the male, and it exposes the immature female to the dangers and risks of pregnancy and parturition (delivery). And a mother who has to provide nutriment for herself as well as for the baby in the womb is likely to prove unequal to either task; the result is that the children born of such mothers are less robust and less vigorous than those born of mature parents. In fact, one cannot imagine how an immature girl of 13 or 14 can bring into the world a strong and healthy child. Even the act of delivery, which is by itself a natural or physiological process, has to be often helped in such cases by surgical means, which are in themselves not free from risk especially on women of low vitality. Child-marriage with poor food and repeated pregnancies, are the potent cause of still-birth and infantile-mortality, and is one of the most important causes of the degeneration of the race. No wonder there is no country in the world where still-births and infant mortality are so high as India.

It has, however, been argued in favour of early marriage that the suppression of the sexual function must have a bad effect on health, and that, therefore, marriage should take place in both sexes even at puberty. This argument seems to be based on a wrong assumption; for, statistical evidence goes to show that the mortality among those married before the 20th year is very high in both

sexes. In fact no girl can be said to be fully mature or developed before she is 18 and no man before he is 20. Manu, however, states that the male should marry only at 24, which is generally the age at which he finishes his studies at the Guru's feet, then only he can marry and become a Grihastha, a house-holder; and that the female should marry only at puberty, which is generally reached in our Country about the 14th year. No girl, therefore, who has the good of her Country at heart and of her progeny and race should, according to modern Science, marry before she is 18, and no man before he is 20.

C. Inter-marriage of Blood-relations

Inter-marriage of blood-relations (consanguinity of marriage) is often objectionable, because the children born of such parents have double (one from the mother's and the other from father's side) chance of inheriting any family weakness or disease that may have existed among their ancestors. A neurotic temperament or a tendency to bodily or mental disease is thus more surely inherited. Cretinism is said to be favoured in this manner and the risk of certain hereditary forms of paralysis, congenital deaf-mutism, retinitis pigmentosa with night-blindness, epilepsy, insanity and still-births is said to be furthered. Further inter-marriage within the narrow circle of blood-relations is a fruitful cause of social degeneration and decay. It is said that the East-End Londoners who intermarry among themselves, all practically members of the same family, do not see the fourth generation. They die out without leaving any issue unless they go out and marry from the country and thus bring fresh blood into the family-stock. For the same reason *sagotra* marriages also are condemned.

On the other hand, if the family be a vigorous one and a healthy one, the inter-marriage of relations may increase desirable traits in the off-spring. This principle is well-

known to horse and cattle-breeders and to dog-owners

Yajnavalkya declares:

"She, the bride, should be of a great family of Srotriyas (students of the Vedas) whose ten ancestors (five from the father's side and five from the mother's side) are renowned, but not of family, though prosperous (or rich in kine, horses, sheep, grains or other property), that has any hereditary disease or taint."

("Hereditary diseases are such as leprosy, epilepsy and the rest. "Taint" is that which enters the system through semen and blood.) Manu, however, adds that "in connecting himself with a wife let him carefully *avoid* the ten following families be they ever so great or rich in kine, horses, sheep, grain or other property, "viz., one which neglects the sacred rites, one in which no male children are born, one in which the Vedas are not studied, one, the members of which have thick hair on the body, those which are subject to hæmorrhoids, phthisis, weakness of digestion, epilepsy or leprosy." The same rules apply to the bride-groom by analogy.

Continues Yajnavalkya:

"The bride-groom too should possess these qualifications (and free from the same defects) and be of the same class (or of a higher), be a Srotriya himself, young, wise, beloved of all, and one whose virile power has been well examined."

Who should not Marry and Why?

According to modern science, there are certain well defined conditions under which it is objectionable to marry:

(1) When the married state and its contingencies would jeopardise the health and perhaps the life of the person, as in cases of grave disease of the heart, of the lungs or of the kidneys, and of greatly contracted pelvis. In such cases death might be the consequence of the marital act or pregnancy or child-birth.

(2) When the person is suffering from a disease likely to be transmitted to the spouse or children, such as, syphilis, leprosy etc.

(3) If the person is suffering from an actively infectious disease like Tuberculosis, marriage should be strongly protested; but whereas in the case of epileptics or diabetics there is no risk of infection, and some of the children may escape the transmission it is advised against marriage on the ground that some atleast of the children would almost certainly inherit the diesase.

(4) In the case of epileptics, alcoholics, opium-eaters and imbeciles it is quite essential that marriage should be prohibited as most certainly in such cases a neurotic class of progeny is the result. Gout and rheumatism are two other conditions usually transmitted to the children, but are not necessarily contra-indications to marriage, as the hereditary tendency can be overcome by an environmental change and good habits of living.

Neurotic conditions of the parents are often transmitted to the offspring and follow what is known as the Mendelian Law: (1) If both parents are neuropathic or suffering from some form of nervous disease the children will be neuropathic or liable to develop one or another form of nervousness. (2) If both parents are normal all the children will be normal and not capable of transmitting any neuropathic tendency to their progeny. (3) But if one parent is normal and the other neuropathic all children will be normal, but capable of transmitting the neuropathic tendency to their progeny.

D. Sexual Abuse

Excessive sexual iudulgence is harmful enough in adult life but much more so in youth. It gives rise to general nervous depression with mental and muscular weakness and results in premature loss of sexual power,

premature old age and often melancholia and other mental disorders. Sexual abuse in the married is the result of ignorance of its bad effects; in the young and the unmarried it is often encouraged by obscene literature, bad company and the lures of prostitution. This is one reason why it is advocated that even young children should not be denied knowledge about sex matters. In fact children cannot be brought up in ignorance of sexual matters and sexual passion, and they must be told the need for controlling that passion. This will sooner help them in avoiding the evils of abuse. There is no danger in continence, but there is great danger in sexual excess. A certain amount of exercise daily, a non-stimulating diet giving a daily action of the bowels, chastity of thought and avoidance of stimulating literature or pictures will render continence easy and keep the body and mind in a vigorous and healthy condition.

According to the Smritis conjugal relations with any person other than the lawful spouse – one united in holy wedlock–constitute one of the five great sins (*Panchamaha–patakani*). And coition even with one's own wife was permitted only under auspicious asterisks and under pleasurable circumstances; it was, however, forbidden on certain days in the inter-menstrual period, during illness and fasting, during certain phases of the moon, during eclipses, and during pollution (*a*shouch) from death or child-birth in the family. No intercourse was permitted in the day-time.

No sexual coitus was permitted with the wife after conception has taken place, and never after the sixth month of pregnancy, when more definite signs of it are evident. This is usually marked by the celebration of certain ceremonies among the Hindus, viz., *Pumsavanam* and *Simant;* the former should be performed before the fœtus begins to move, i. e., before the 18th week of pregnancy, and the latter either in the 6th or 8th month.

Intercourse during pregnancy is positively harmful both to the mother and the fœtus inside her and exposes her to the risk of puerperal sepsis after delivery, and medical opinion has never been more unanimous than in this regard.

In the case of lower animals, once the female has been satisfied by the male during the "rut," she will never allow the male to approach her again. In this matter, therefore, man, a higher being, has to learn a useful lesson from the lower animals.

The sanity of the above instructions must, however, be obvious to the modern generation. In the first place venereal disease would be excluded from the community; and secondly, there would be no need for practices like Contraception and Rejuvenation. These are simply fads of modern civilisation, which are admittedly harmful to health and progeny when injudiciously and indiscriminately adopted and without proper medical guidance.

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CHAPTER V

MODERN CIVILISATION AND ITS DRAWBACKS

Even the primitive man recognised the importance of fresh air, of sunlight and of pure water for his very existence and worshipped the Elements, the Sun and the Rivers as his Gods. At first he lived an itinerant sort of life fixing his temporary abode in open space preferably near rivers and springs, and moved on to a fresher and cleaner spot when the original habitat became too unclean. He thus lived practically in the open air and sunlight with his body bare, and drank pure water; his food was of the simplest kind and fresh, and consisted at first of fruits and nuts which Nature yielded, flesh of animals which he hunted, fish and fowl, and latterly of cereals and milk when he learnt the art of cultivation and kept cattle and sheep. He worked hard in the day. This gave him appetite and enabled him to digest his food and build his muscles and vitality, secured him the night's rest; made him immne to the ravages of the elements and to disease.

In fact his was a happy life, disease was practically unknown to him, and premature death even from child-birth was rare, and he lived to a ripe old age.

But with the advent of civilisation and culture instead of "advancing unto light" he gradually receded from it. At first he excluded light from his body by clothing it, next he built houses in which he spent most of his time shielding himself and his effects from light. Thus, from the broad day-light of the farm and the forest he led himself "into the shadows of darkness", and when he built the modern city with its cramped houses and narrow streets he made direct sunlight a comparative stranger. Finally, when, with the development of industries and increase of

manufacture and consequent rush for town life, the atmosphere became impure, laden with smoke, dust, dirt, toxic gases and fumes, the most vital and all-energising rays of the Sun were practically shut out from him. Constant breathing of such an atmosphere lowered his strength and working efficiency, his vitality, his well-being and his power of resistance to disease. Rickets, tuberculosis and heart-disease were the inevitable result.

While the effects on the body were bad enough those on the mind were worse, as "gloom without made for gloom within" and induced mental depression.

Man next developed a new taste, an appetite for the pleasures of the table. From the fresh and natural food of his early days he slowly went on to refined foods, seasoned foods, artificial foods and preserved foods - all these are devitalised and deficiency foods in the extreme; and took to tea, coffee and liqours - "ales stronger than Adam drank" and smoking. Such life coupled with sedentary habits, excesses of various sorts and late hours of club-life rendered possible by the discovery of electric power and light, upset his digestion, interfered with his rest and rendered him liable to dyspepsia, liver-abscess, gout, rheumatism, diabetes, Bright's disease, high blood-pressure, cancer etc.

Venereal disease *slowly crept in, in fact, it has almost become a truism to say that "syphilisation was concurrent with civilisation." The sweet pleasures of the table have after all, led to the "bitter griefs of life".

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*Syphilis was unknown in India before it was introduced by the sailors of Vasco de Gama at Calicut about 1500 A D. The Hindu writer Bhava Misra of the 16th century describes the disease in his Medical treatise, Bhava Prakash, uuder the name of *pharangi* (Portuguese disease). Mercurial treatment for syphilis does not therefore find a place in the old Indian treatises on Medicine either in Charaka and Sushruta or even later works such as Vagbhata's Astangahridaya, but finds a place in Bhava Misra's work.

Lastly, the speed, the stress and keenness of competition of modern industrial and social life shattered his nerves and rendered him unable to stand the strain of civilisation. The result was a general mental weakness perhaps verging on insanity with its suicidal and criminal tendencies.

Thus, paradoxical as it may seem, the blessings of civilisation have given rise to an immense increase in the suicidal rate, new forms of disease of the body and the mind, growing social unrest and a tendency to revolt, a spread of crime, unemployment and poverty and want. The most cultured communities are foremost in spending large sums of money on alcohol and narcotics, and the habitual use of these can generally be traced to the anxiety, stress and worry inseparable under present conditions from civilised living. Material prosperity is largely illusive and life itself is often sacrificed in its attainment.

It is said on good authority that the chief influence of our present-day education and environment of a materialistic civilisation, on modern minds both in the West and elsewhere has been that "the ordinary man leaves religion severely alone."

As a result of this combination spiritual education which has been our birth-right for centuries has now been utterly given up.

Our commonest excuse, however, for this indifference or neglect is "want of time." We have around us so many attractions of modern life, and we have enough time and even to spare, for the enjoyment of nearly all of them; but we put forward this excuse (of want of time) unfortunately in respect of two of the most important necessities of life, viz., Prayer and Physical Exercise, the one aims at spiritual development and the other bodily health and vigour.

In fact, the two should go hand in hand, as without the one the other is not practicable. Neglect of these two

essentials can therefore be said to have led us to physical and spiritual bankruptcy.

But the Orient is not so bad in this respect as the more civilised, Occident At the present moment when age-long values of life are in the melting pot and well-established ideas of conduct are no longer acceptable to people, when we are face to face with wanton destruction and bloodshed and unmerited suffering everywhere, in fact when the entire humanity is being subjected to an outrageous rape by a ruthless thirst for power, does not it naturally occur to anyone – "Is there a God at all? If there is one, why then does He permit all this?" In fact, in the tragedy that is engulfing Europe to-day and with it practically the whole of the Eastern hemisphere, the common philosophy of Prayer, "Thy will be done!" has altogether been changed into the "My Will be done" of the Dictators. These would, no doubt, one day be amazed to discover how much more enjoyable their lives would be, if they should substitute "Thy" for "My" in their daily prayer.

Now, however, gloomy the above picture be there is Science, which has been growing steadily with the advancement of civilisation, there is Religion, the outcome of an age-long experience, there is the code of Ethics with its "do"s and "dont"s, there is common sence, which all human beings should have, and above all, the efforts of Hygienists, —all these come to man's rescue and lead him to a new realisation, that of a happier life.

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CHAPTER VI

THE FOUR ASHRAMAS (Stages of Life)

The Manusmriti says:

"Under instructions of his Guru or even otherwise the student should ever engage in study and in doing service to the Guru."

"The student should refrain from wine, meat, perfumes, garlands, tasty and savoury dishes, women, acids and injury to sentient creatures."

"The student should refrain from lust, anger and greed, dancing, singing and playing on musical instruments, from dice-playing, gossip, slander and from untruth."

"The student should always sleep alone and should not waste his seed; he who from lust, wastes his seed destroys his vow."

The *A*shrama life of the Hindus is the very root of their spiritual culture. Whatever of idealism the Hindu has developed in his Country has been very largely due to this age-long system, in which from the very early days of his civilisation he has realised all the possibilities of building up an ideal for the individual. It is by this system of individual character-training that the Hindu has been able to root deep in his land the ideal of spiritual culture. In order that the necessary divisions of caste may not breed pride of position or conceit of personality, the individual must go through severe training and discipline to develop a spirit of self detachment in the four stages of life–the four *A*shramas.

The children of the three higher castes,–the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas–will have to go through the ceremonial of *Upanayana*–the investiture of the sacred thread–about the eighth year; after which the boy enters

the house of his Guru, who takes charge of him, not for the sake of money, but for the sake of imparting knowledge and wisdom.

This first stage of life is Brahmacharya or discipleship. In this *Ashrama* the vow of "poverty, chastity and obedience" is taken. The house of the Guru, as are all homes of holiness in India, is very plain and simple. The Guru lives with his wife and children, and there receives his young disciple, who comes to be made fit for different positions he will occupy in life. The first and foremost thing that the children of the Hindus learn at the feet of their masters is the Knowledge of God. The Guru wants to build up his disciple's ideal and character through training and discipline which will give him a stamp, as it were, in after-life, by the strength of which he will be able to meet the disciplines of life itself.

In the house of the Guru there is observed no caste. All the children live together with the children of the Guru himself on absolute equality, whatever the rank or caste of their parents. In the forest-university of India, the home of hundreds and thousands of Gurus, the disciples learned one thing, the Knowledge of God; and though varied by modern conditions, the ideal of the Ashrama life is to-day the same. The *chelas* (disciples) study grammar and rhetoric, history and philosophy, law and literature; but the one fundamental note that the Guru tries to impart is the note of harmony in all functions of life.

There, in the house of the Guru, the chela gets his training for the next stage of life. He learns to love his other caste-fellows, to mingle his joy and sorrow with theirs and thus prepares himself for that great communistic-life for which India has been so famous all over the World. If the parents of the disciples can send any money, well and good; if not, the Gurus are supported by the people and especially by the local Rajahs.

Although this system of support, based on the Hindu idea of sacredness of learning, has been somewhat modernised by western civilisation, still in the Indian States and Principalities, it is very prevalent. It is only the lure of material civilisation that is gradually drawing India out of her own settled ideals. But inspite of this influence, the Hindu's Ashram life still contributes very largely to the moulding of the Hindu character.

After going through a period of initiation until he is 25 or 30, he comes back home to marry and settle as a house-holder (*Grihastha*). This is the second stage of life. Here he comes in contact for the first time in a wide sense with his village and with his clan. But he enters into this stage of life with all the benefits of the previous training of the mind. He now uses those benefits to help in realising his ideals. He performs his household duties, not for himself but for others. He goes to the daily business of his life, but he knows that his business and every function of his life is for the glorification of God. He knows that he is a part of Prakriti. He tries to tune himself with Prakriti or nature, from which he gets the Inner Law of his being. All individual relations are to a Hindu his sacrament. He adores father and mother as "Deity incarnate in human flesh." He loves his brother and sister, and in realising this love from his childhood he goes through various symbolic processes and annual ceremonies. He has not only learned to love his own brother and sister, but the Mantras that he utters every day solemnly, help him to visualise the Universe as his brother and sister. His alms and charity, the way it is distributed, develops in him a heart and soul, not an organised machine. But whether little or much, he does all for the ideal which ultimately helps him to enter into the next stage – Vanaprastha or stage of meditation.

All ideals are the result of introspection. Hindu

culture is the result of his meditation. He begins his life when he enters into the house of his Guru, in meditation; and in meditation, stage after stage, he comes to the highest stage of life. His life's ideal may have been disturbed by the outward rust of life. But this is only temporary. He knows his ideal. If he has forgotten, it is only for the moment. He will rise up to it more fully. You can only see Humanity, as it is, through meditation.

Through meditation the Hindu reaches his God and Humanity, in relations and inter-relations. The sense of eternity and eternal relations with the Universe grows deeper and deeper. He is thus prepared to enter the fourth or final stage of life – *Sannyas*, which means Renunciation.

Sannyas is the highest stage a Hindu can conceive of. It is the highest ideal. The first three stages are only preliminaries. In this stage he renounces the world, but enters into an order of diviner service. He lives no longer specially for his family and home. He exists for the higher group of race and mankind. He is beyond caste, past all limitations. He begins to realise himself as part and parcel of Humanity. The world is his kin. He has been able to kill his lower self; only his higher Self exists. He has no race, no nation. He is a part of the universe. His religion has developed into God-Vision. He communes with Him day and night. He serves the sick, consoles the bereaved. He rejoices himself in the service of others, and becomes the master of his country and the maker of his destiny.

Says Sreekrishna:

Anashritah karmaphalam karyam karma karoti yah, sah sannyasee cha yogee cha na niragnih na cha akriah.

"He who performs his Nityakarmas (bounden duty) without leaning to the fruit of action – he is a real Sannyasi, a real yogi – (a renouncer of action, and a person of steadfast mind); not he who is without fire, nor he who is without action, i. e., not he who has renouncedact ions like

Agnihotra, nor he who has renounced actions, austerities and meritorious deeds." (Gita VI. 1.)

It is not only the three caste-people who can take to Sannyas; any one is entitled to this stage, provided he has qualified himself in the previous stages. There are Mahammadan *Sannyasis* who are equally respected and honoured by the Hindus. It is the Spirit which touches Spirit. The moment a foreigner touches the shores of India with the ideal of renunciation he touches the Indian heart itself.

The Hindu is never aggressive, and he does not like that the aggressive spirit should grow in his own land. The Ashrama life has evolved in every Hindu household an ideal of toleration; his religion is tolerant, his social structure tolerant, his political ideals tolerant. From the federation of individuals comes the federation of races and nations – the federation of Humanity. It is in the *Sannyasi* that the ultimate conception of the Hindu ideal finds its embodiment.

Thus, the four stages of Ashrama life lead, as a man ascends by a ladder, from the lowest step to the highest. From discipleship in the house of the Guru, he gradually ascends to the highest pinnacle and ultimately loses himself in God.

To a Sannyasi God is everything. By thus losing he finds his real Self. He becomes a great individualistic force. He is free, because he is above all the limitations of his own personality. He has no interests of his own; his chief object is to carry his ideal, the ideal of Renunciation. This ideal the Hindu has developed through these 5000 years by the Ashrama system of life, culminating in the Sannyasi; who is "one with God and one with Humanity."

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CHAPTER VII

THE CASTE SYSTEM (The Four *Varnas*)

The true ideal of caste is an extension of the Hindu family ideal, where each has his right place and privileges, and where the ideal of all is "service for all." As in the family the elders have the chief obligations and responsibilities, while the children have lesser reverence but greater freedom. So the higher castes have the chief responsibility for the welfare of the whole, and have to go through many disciplines from which the lower castes (like children) are exempt.

Like all other Hindu institutions, the caste-system was also based upon the ideal of spiritual culture. It grew naturally as their civilisation grew, adapting itself to race and nation, it developed as they developed.

This great institution, so much criticised by people without any attempt at properly understanding, remains the wonder of the world, and has aroused keen inquiry as to its longevity.

Now, what is it that has kept the Hindu race so intact? Storm after storm has swept over, but the Hindu race remains, and the Hindu is still Hindu. Where are the ancient civilisation? In Europe the Roman Eagle has fallen, the Byzantine Empire dwindled to pieces, ancient Greece and Carthage are no more. But India lives and renews her youth "treasuring the jewel of her ancient heritage in the strong-hold of caste." In fact caste has preserved the life and ideal of the Hindu race; and the institution of caste was evolved for the efficient organisation of the Country, and proved itself fitted for this purpose better than any social system yet discovered in any part of the World.

Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas-these were the three twice-born (*dwija*) orders, belonging to the original Aryan stock, who had practically the same rights and privileges. But it is natural for a group of people who work together for a certain time to become to a certain extent a fixed group, with fixed ideals; and these ideals grow amongst them to such an extent that they become practically the very life and breath of that group.

It was natural for the group of people who were thinking all the time about spiritual matters in the forest-universities of India, to think only of the Absolute and to forget the world. Those were the days of the discovery of spiritual truths amongst our forefathers, unequalled, unsurpassed, by any nation of the world.

It was natural for those who were fighting men to honour them and see that they were not disturbed in their spiritual studies, and were protected from the surrounding enemies then in India, the non-Aryans. At the same time it was natural that both those who were busy in matters of spiritual discovery, and those who were protecting them, should be fed, and fed properly. So there arose a class whose duty was to look after the economic problem.

The first class who were busy in spiritual discovery were the Brahmins, the second or fighting class, the Kshatriyas and the third Vaishyas or the Trading Class (Vanik-jana, Banyas); but all these three classes had the same rights and privileges.

These were the necessary component parts of the great Hindus that had settled in India; they conquered the non-Aryans who by race and tradition were inferior. After their gradual conquest, these also became members of the Hindu family, but with inferior rank. These are the Sudras. By this means our forefathers protected themselves from interfusion with an inferior race, and at the same time avoided the alternatives that all other Aryan people have

deemed necessary, namely, slavery or extermination. The Sudra had his own rights and privileges and was respected by all the other castes.

It is worthy of note that in the Hindu system the highest caste was not that of the greatest worldly power, as in other social systems to-day. The Brahmin was above the King, by virtue of his greater renunciation and discipline. The pure Hindu Brahmin is from the Vedic times the same. He has never earned any money. He does not earn any money to-day. His vocation was teaching that it is to-day. His house is a simple house, his wife an humble woman. She devotedly serves her husband and the students that surround him, The teacher does not take money, but he feeds hundreds of disciples. He is supported by the Rajas and the people; for it is considered a sacred duty and privilege to sustain these who are conservers of spiritual learning. He has nothing for the morrow. By culture and tradition he lives by faith. He trusts in God, and God feedeth him.

There is a story of Sree Krishna told in our villages, which illustrates this beautiful faith, that God careth for his devotees more than we can ask or think.

A Brahmin was copying the text of the Gita:

Ananyaschintayantho mam ye janah paryupasate tesham nitya bhiyuktanam yogakshemam vahamiaham.

Pondering on the Text it seemed to the Brahmin irreverent to think of the Lord as Himself *carrying* what they lack to His devotees, and he decided that the word "carry" must be an error. He, therefore, erased the word carefully with a penknife, and substituted the word "send." A few moments later, as he rose to go to bathe in the Ganga before eating, his wife came to him with a troubled face and told him there was no food in the house and that the last had been given to a guest. "Do not be troubled," said the Brahmin gently, "let us call upon the Lord to

fulfil his own promise." He had only left the room a few minutes, when a beautiful youth stood at the door with a basket of delicious food. "Your husband called me to carry this" he said, giving the basket to the Brahmin's wife. But as the youth lifted his arms she saw that there were gashes over his heart-region. "My poor boy" she exclaimed, "who has wounded you?" The youth replied gently "your husband wounded me, Mother, before he called me." "My husband!" exclaimed the wife in amazement. "He would not hurt any living thing, not even an insect." But the beautiful youth had vanished, and at the same moment her husband re-entered the room. "How was it possible" she cried in bewilderment, "that you could have cruelly hurt the beautiful boy whom you sent here with food?" "I sent no food" said the Brahmin, "I have not left the house." Then the eyes of the husband and wife met, and they knew who had brought the food, and that they had wounded the heart of the Lord doubting the perfection of his promise. The Brahmin then restored the sacred Text to its original form-"I myself carry to them."

Scores of such stories are current in the common folk-lore of these parts regarding Sree Vitoba of Pandharpur.

The Brahmin is respected, not because he is called Brahmin, but because of the renunciation and sacrifice that he has lived up to and placed before the Country. By keeping the spiritual fire burning round him from the ancient days he has been a power in the land. He teaches his students the spiritual truths. In the laboratory of Nature, we shall see later, he found his ample elements. He never dreamed of dreadnoughts and super-dreadnoughts, zeppelins and airships, he conjured not dum-dum bullets or poison-gas or atomic bombs. His one message was the message of spirituality, and by that gift he had made his country what she has been, is and shall be. Kings were afraid of Brahmins. Who will not stand in awe

before such an ideal of sacrifice and renunciation? The King sends food and clothing regularly for thousands of students. He serves with his material treasures as the Brahmin serves with his treasures of learning.

Brahmins used to live in the forest and on the river banks. They made sacrifice and ablutions with fire and water, the sacred symbols of their life and culture. When a Brahmin comes to any social function, he comes bare-footed, simple in dress, but all the assembled guests stand in his honour. He does not seek honours, but honours seek him. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven, and all these things shall be added unto you." Our forefathers have sought always the Kingdom of Heaven, and they found, like Jesus, that "the Kingdom of God is not without but within."

India has caste, the West has class. Caste is internal, class external. Caste is cultural and spiritual; its ideal, mutual obligation and service. Class is credal and material, based on arbitrary ideas of superiority and material power. Class-feeling dominates everything in the West. "In India with all our Caste," says Maitra, "there was never either class-feeling or race-antagonism. These have come with Western influence Even Missionaries coming to India form a caste of their own, really mixing very little with the people, except for the so-called "saving of souls." When they have made a convert, he is not received on an equal footing. He has left his own home and he finds, to his surprise, himself really an outcaste in the home of his adoption. He discovers the separation of class and race, undefined, more difficult to contend against than any barriers of caste among his own people."

The Hindus, on the other hand, have in their midst an ordered society which is a real brotherhood. The Brahmin looks to the interest of the Kshatriya, the Kshatriya to that of the Brahmin; and the same holds true between all the

castes. Sudras are not in any way neglected; they are also invited for all the national festivals and ceremonies. One caste is indispensable to the other, and in all Hindu religious observances the injunctions are such that the Brahmin cannot perform them without the Sudra. The Brahmin must feed the Sudra, must love him as his own child.

A Brahmin at the time of dinner may not touch a Sudra; but it is not only a Sudra, his own son may not touch him. Eating is a sacrament to a Brahmin, to be sacredly performed. He realises in the sacrament that he is eating the very breath of God. It is not hatred, it is on the other hand, realisation; it is not for division, but for higher union. Every function of daily life to a Hindu is his devotion, through which he tries to realise his God. Although the Brahmin does not eat with Sudra he does not love him less; in fact the Sudra is a very part and parcel of the family.

Caste in our Country has never brought any class-division; and division between one caste people and another is not due to any distinction between man and man. The Brahmin has never quarrelled with his Sudra neighbour, nor has a Kshatriya ever made any attempt to thrust his sword into his neighbour's breast. If hatered has come between caste and caste at any time it has sunk into the ideal of Brotherhood again. All the religious reformers who have appeared in India from time to time have proclaimed this ideal of Brotherhood. They have sought not to do away with caste, but to purify it, to bring it back to the ideal. These reformers have come from all ranks and grades of classes, even from Mahammadans; but they are equally respected by all our people. Says the Gita: (V. 18).

"Sages look equally on a Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog and the lowest Chandala" (*shwapaka* is one who cooks dog's flesh for food, hence a Chandala).

* * * *

India is full of songs and stories expressing the truth, "All is One." There can be no distinction between man and man, for the Divine Spirit is in all.

The great Shamkara, Teacher and Reformer, was one day coming from his bath in the holy Ganga (Ganges), when a Chandala and his wife came in his way. "Move away, move away', – *Gachha gachheti* – said Shamkara. The Chandala replies: "O Dwijavara, in asking me to keep at a distance do you presume that whilst our dirty physical bodies may differ from each other, the Spirit (Chaitanya) within us is not the same?" (Maneesha panchak).

Annamayat annamayam athava chaitanyameva chaitanyat, Dwijavara dooreekartum vanchhasi kim broohi.

"Is there any difference between the reflection of the Sun from the holy waters of the Ganga and that from the dirty water flowing from the lowly hut of a Chandala? or between the *akash* contained in a gold jug and that in a mud pot?"

Kim Gangambuni bimbite ambara manou chandala vatee payah poorechantara masti kanchana ghatee mritkumbhayorv-ambare.

"Since the existence of the same Invisible Spirit is experienced by all beings in the calm and quiet ocean of Universal Bliss (how could His touch contaminate and) why should there be this obsession – that this is a Chandala and that is a Brahmin?"

Pratyag vastuni nistaranga sahajananda avabodhambu-dhow vipro ayam shwapacho ayam ittyapi mahan koyam vibheda bhramah.

The Chandala next proceeded to expound the philosophy of One-ness. Shamkara listened in wonderment and humbly acknowledged that he was wrong. Whereupon the Chandala stood revealed as God Shiva with Parvati, and Shamkara fell at Their feet.

"Caste is, thus, Unity in variety." It has brought out

a spirit of Brotherhood, the ideal of which is to sink all differences of passion and prejudices, to work in one's own guild, yet contribute to the race and to the nation, an ideal of federation, an ideal of communism. It is this Idealism that has held the Hindu race.

"Form without spirit is lifeless" says Maitra, "and whatever faults exist in the caste-system today are due to a loss of the true spirit of caste, partly from foreign influence, and largely to the consequent decline of the *A*shrama system of education. It is to a revival of this system that we must look, for a revival of the true spirit of caste; changes will come, as they have always been, *from within!*"

When our forefathers immersed themselves in the sacred rivers they always thought and prayed that the waters of their country might enter into their very soul. They did it with the ideal of linking themselves with all the people that inhabited their Motherland. The Hindu never built in hatred. Hatred was never his foundation. It was always One-ness. He has adapted his social ideal to the progressive genius of his race. He is unique in that. His growth is from within, and from within he will to-day and in the future build his ideal for the coming race.

Whatever is the form of Hindu civilisation, the spirit expressed therein has always been that of Brotherhood, of Harmony, of One-ness!

"One piece of iron is the Image in the Temple,
And another, the knife in the hand of the butcher,
But when they touch the philosopher's stone (*Sparsha*)
Both alike turn to gold!"

2

"The seers of the early Vedic period know nothing of caste. Delve as much as one may into the literature of the period one discovers only classes and not castes. The

elements which go to form castes were, however, there, so that gradually a gulf was created between one order and another. For a long time, however, the conception of social segregation and untouchability was repugnant to the genius of the people, who sought unity in variety and dissolved variety in unity. Each class was regarded as an integral part of the fabric of society." (R. P. Masani–Caste and the Structure of Society).

If then the Vedas provide no authority for the caste system, in what way is it connected with religion? It is true all Hindu Law takes caste for granted, all the Puranas assume the existence of caste and look upon it as divinely ordained. But where is the authority for this theory of the Divine ordinance of caste? True, the Githa says: (IV.13)

Chaturvarnyam maya sristham guna karma vibhagashah.

"I created the four-fold caste on the basis of Guna (quality) and Karma (action)." But clearly this statement of Sree Krishna is an attack on the basis of Hindu caste-system and not its justificatien. "It is the most unequivocal repudiation of the divine origin of caste system based on birth" says Sirdar K. M. Panikkar (Pages 27 & 28 "Hinduism and the Modern World."), "the most categorical denial of the Brahminical claims of inherent superiority. No one denies that even in "classes" societies, life has to be organised on the basis of Guna (quality) and Karma (action), but the idea that Hindu religion gives sanction to inequality based on birth seems to be untrue on the face of this statement in the most sacred of all Hindu texts outside the Vedas; and the Vedas, as we have seen, give no justification to the theory either.

"If religion does not, what gives the appeance of religious sanction to the caste-sytem? The answer is Hindu Law. Manu undoubtedly bases his whole code on caste-system. But no divine character was claimed for Manu's laws by the Brahmins themselves till comparatively

recent times. In fact a historical enquiry into the origin of Hindu codes would clearly establish that they grew but slowly and were never in the days of their formation considered unchangeable or divinely inspired."

This naturally leads us to the consideration of certain facts about our untouchable and depressed classes. Spread all over India there are over 60 million people divided into different castes, tribes and sub-castes and who by their mere touch, and in some cases even their shadow "pollutes" others. How far this is carried is best illustrated from the practice in Malabar, "the unpolluted sanctuary of orthodoxy," where there is a graded system of distances for castes, nearer than which their approach pollutes the members of a superior caste. Till recently such castes were not permitted to use even the same roads, they could not bathe in the same tanks, draw water from the same well, or attend the same schools. In other parts of India though there is no distance-pollution, the untouchables are not permitted to draw water from the same well, attend the same schools and of course they could not worship in the temple without polluting God himself. These customs mean in the first place a denial of opportunities so complete as to keep the untouchables perpetually in a state of serfdom. In the second place they mean an absolute segregation, an exclusion from all contact such as no community was ever able to enforce anywhere else in the world.

"In the view of modern socialists the Hindu Caste System is an ancient economic order, where society is divided into four main groups:

(1) The idealistic, which emphasizes the purity of the means;
(2) The altruistic, which emphasizes the nobility of the end.
(3) The materialistic; and
(4) The routine - worker group.

The Hindu plan, they say, attempts to avoid exploitation, and aims at distributing justice by maintaining these groups in watertight compartments. In the first group falls the Brahmin, who is allotted respect, but no property. He gets his food by begging. This must be the lot of all brain-workers. They are sterilised economically from misappropriating the fruits of their natural endowments for their selfish ends. Their purpose in life is the service of the community through pure means.

The Kshatriya of the second group loses himself in seeking the welfare of society. His glory is the service of his fellowmen, and his reward, social honour and status.

To the third in order belongs the Vaishya, the materialistic merchant and entrepreneur (organiser of entertainments) who amasses wealth but gets no social honour or position other than what he may secure by dedicating his possessions for the use of the community.

The last in the order is the Sudra, who is happy with his salary and has no courage to take the risks that the third group ventures out in and delights in.

Pruned of all extraneous growth, this is the core of the Caste System. It curbs devastating cut-throat competition as a factor in social alignment and emphasizes co-operation and obedience as the basis of all law and order. It is graded on a cultural standard of values almost unknown to money economy. Material considerations sink into insignificance when human needs claim our attention. Duty and not our rights, determines our position in Society. Once these conditions are firmly established, we shall have prepared the way of peace, when war shall be no more."

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The patient researches of historians, proved, that many of the customs which claimed antiquity as their sanction were not prevalent in historical times; for example, it was the belief till recent times that Hindu religion

prohibited journey across the seas. The Brahmins enforced punishment of social exclusion against all who dare to break this custom, and the Ruling Princes of Cochin and Travancore in the South prohibited till less than 20 years ago the entry of such people into Hindu Temples. Historical research has, however, knocked the bottom out of this custom. "The history of the Hindu Colonial Empires in Java, Sumatra, Siam and Camboj" says Panikkar, "clearly established that in the days of Hindu political independence no such restrictions existed. Further it was proved to satisfaction that orthodox Brahmins led such expeditions overseas."

Chief References

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CHAPTER VIII

THE HINDU FAITH

When the Indo-Aryans crossed the Indus, they had a culture of their own. They were not a primitive race, but had a history, a tradition and an ideal. That ideal found its outlet under the star-lit sky of the new environment, of the new atmosphere. They breathed a new breath, they sat for a new meditation.

It began in wonder. They found themselves in the midst of an exuberance of nature, its wide expanse enveloped them all round; and they sang with a rapture that filled their hearts, as the *chatak* does in summer-time as it soars higher and higher, and in its realised dream bathes with sweet melody the mass of mankind beneath. So the Indian bard sang.

And he sang for his God, His Glory, the God within and the God without. He wanted to realise himself, to realise God; he wanted to find his Self, and in finding he saw a Self behind his Self, a Self beyond all Nature.

Vast was his laboratory, the extensive sky above, the ever-glowing Sun, the beautiful dawn, the maddening Moon of the nights, the star-lit atmosphere, the snow-clad heights of the Himalayas and the majestic rivers by his side, which seemed as the flow of the Great Spirit of the Universe.

He saw this Great Spirit everywhere, to that he offered his sacrifices; he saw God in the sacrificial fire, "as Moses saw Him in the burning bush;" he saw the lightning and he heard the thunder. The deep forest was his University, he built his home on the banks of the river, the Nature appeared to him as a great reality, because through Nature he received his revelations. He addressed

God in all, the One All-pervading Spirit; he witnessed this Great Spirit everywhere, – the Spirit that was the Life, that was the Soul, that was the All.

Thus grew his wonder, his passion and his worship. He has found, yet he wants to find, and is ever running towards the Ideal of God. His ideal is to rise higher and higher in the scale of evolution – an evolution that is for Eternity.

The Hindu believed in only One God, One Existence; and it is simply preposterous to his idea that he should ever have thought of more than one God – *Ekameva adviteeyam*. "There is only One without a second." No race on Earth with even a little intelligence can ever think that there are two Gods; far more so, therefore, with a race which in the beginning of the world's civilisation, as we saw, conceived a philosophy and system of thought which no other nation has ever equalled.

Indram Mitram Varunam Agnim ahuh, atho divyah sasuparno Garutman, Ekamsat vipra bahudha vadanti, Agnim Yamam Materishwanam ahuh.

"They call Him Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, and He is heavenly noble-winged Garutman. He is One, Truth, The Supreme Reality. Only sages call Him by many names, Agni, Yama, Matarishwan and so on."

Tameeshanam jagatah tastushaspatim dhiyam jinmamavase hoomahe vayam.

"We offer oblation to that Sole Ruler of the Universe, who directly sustains and supports all things, animate and inanimate."

The above Vedic hymns unmistakably indicate that the Hindu did not worship Nature as such, but that he realised the existence of a Superme Being (*Purusha*) behind all Nature and Nature's phenomena; and in order to realise himself in that Being, whom he addressed as the very Soul of everything, he had his rituals, ceremonies and

sacrifices. Sacrifice to a Hindu had a great symbolism, it was not a meaningless something that was done as an external propitiation; the whole kernel of sacrifice was to bring him in direct contact with God.

Thus was laid the foundation of the Hindu culture. He was still experimenting on Nature within him and without. He received his revelation through Nature, he established his university in his forest-home, and from his forest-university came the stream of his ideals and his culture.

The principles which were the foundation for such cultural ideals and the method of training that was in vogue in the Vedic times, and is followed even to this day are best illustrated in the story of Brighu in the Taittiriya Upanishad. Young Bhrigu came to his father, the Sage Varuna, requesting, "Revered Father, instruct me about the Brahman". His father said "Go and meditate, my child, thus will you know the Brahman" and to help him in meditation he gave the son the following clue:

Yato va imani bhootani jayante, yena jatani jeevanti, yat prayanti abhisamvishanti, tat vijijnasasva, tat Brahma iti.

The son went away with this formula and started his meditation; and when he came back, he said, "I find that Food-*annam*-is the Brahman. Is that right, O Father?" His father simply said, "go and meditate, my child, and by meditation you will know the Brahman." The son went away, and this time he came back with the answer "Life is the Brahman" - *Prano Brahma iti.* "Go and meditate again" said his illumined father. The son went away again, and again came back, and this time he said "Unity of Consciousness is the Brahman" - *mano vijnanam va.* The father said once more "go and meditate, and by meditation you will know the Brahman". The son went away once more, and when he came back he was glowing with enlightenment, his face indicated a passionate

exuberance – the expression of the Soul; and when he saw his father he exclaimed from a distance "I have found Him, I have found Him, *A*nanda (Love, Delight) is the Brahman (*Anando Brahma iti*). The father embraced the son and said, "yes, my child, you are right. From *A*nanda have all things come into being; having come into being, by *A*nanda are they kept alive; towards *A*nanda do they move, and into *A*nanda do they enter."

Such was the method of training which was, and is still, in vogue in the Hindu schools, ancient and modern; and this is the note of the spiritual culture which the Hindu has enunciated from the very beginning of his civilisation. He from his early days of life goes through a training and discipline which gradually lead him up to his Ideal, namely, the realisation of God in all things.

2

Dharma – Artha – K*a*ma and Moksha

According to the Hindu Scriptures man's outlook in life is four-fold:

Dharma, *Artha* (acquisition of wealth), *Kama* (desire) and *Moksha* (salvation); the first three form one group, and the fourth another. The latter can be obtained only by renouncing the first three, namely, Dharma, Artha and K*a*ma. Realising the importance of the two factors the ancient Sages advised the people to abstain from making any attempt to modify destiny in the first group, and to utilise free Will to their level best for securing Moksha.

Dharma

The word "religion," as is commonly understood in the West, means a system of faith and worship; and belief in the tenets of a Church and performance of certain rites or rituals prescribed by that Church are all that constitutes religion.

The Hindus, however, have really no such word as religion, and the word has no synonym in Samskrit either. Our word is Dharma, and Dharma has a much wider significance than religion, and includes more than religion. The root of the word Dharma is *dhri*=to hold, and that of the word religion is *L.* ligare=to bind. That which holds holds by an inner Law. What binds is an external bondage.

Now, everything in the Universe has its Dharma, because it must rely on something for its existence. Now, what is that something on which the existence of a thing mainly depends? It is the essential nature of the thing, without which it can never exist. The essential nature of a thing, therefore, is called its Dharma. Dharma is then really the inner law of being, and applies to everything in the universe as well as man. Thus, the power to burn is the Dharma of fire, that of water is to cool. The Dharma of honey is sweetness. Inertia is the Dharma of all inanimate objects.

Man also has an essential nature that upholds his existence as something distinct from and above the rest of creation. And this must be the Dharma of man – *manava-dharma.*

It is through this idea of Dharma that the Hindu has gradually built up a complete system of spiritual culture. He has never separated life from religion, or religion from life. In fact, the two are so intermingled that one does not know where the one melts into the other. It is like the question – whether the seed precedes the tree or the tree precedes the seed.

Now, what is this *manava-dharma* or essential nature of man, which we said, distinguishes him from the rest of the creation? It is his "power of becoming divine" that marks man out from all other beings; and this power is inherent in him and is born with him.

But, how is it possible for man to become "divine?"

Hinduism teaches that God is present everywhere:

Om, Eeshavasyamidam sarvam yat kim cha jagatyam jagat.

"All that whatsoever is changeful in this world, is all covered by the Lord." (Isha. Up)

God is also in our hearts. We are divine by nature. But Divinity lies deep in our being and we do not perceive it so long as our unclean mind stands in the way. Just as light cannot be seen through a smoky chimney, so God cannot be seen through an unclean mind, though all the while He is in us and everywhere about us. If we want light we have to cleanse the chimney. So also if we want to bring out the Divinity in us we have to cleanse our mind.

Lust, greed, anger, hatred, envy, pride and selfishness–these are the many impurities that obscure the Divinity within us; and so long as these sway our mind we are apt to commit mistakes almost at every step of our life and very often behave like brutes; our imperfection fills up the cup of our misery, and brings untold sufferings upon others.

It is due to these impurities that at the start we seem to stand on a level with the brutes; yet we are not brutes, for the mere reason that we can work our way up to Divinity, which the brutes cannot. As men we are born with the power of removing all the impurities of our mind and becoming divine in all our bearings. This is our essential nature as we have seen, our *manavadharma*.

Those who revel in these impurities have not yet emerged as men. They are only beasts, but in human form; while those who succeed in cleansing their minds thoroughly and bringing out the Divinity within them are real men, men who have attained perfection, reached the goal of human life. Of course the path is long and the goal is far ahead. To bring out the Divinity in us com-

pletely is no easy task. The whole advance cannot be made by a single step. Yet it is a fact that a little progress on the path of Dharma has its own reward. As our minds become purer we grow wiser and get more strength and more joy. This inspires us to move forward and gradually increase our wisdom, strength and joy.

This cleansing process goes on from birth to birth till the mind becomes absolutely pure. It is then that man can see God, touch God, talk to God and can even become one with God; that is to say, man becomes perfect, for it is then that the Divinity that has all along been within man does manifest itself completely.

Indeed the Seer of God becomes truly Divine, full of love, joy, wisdom and strength. He rises above nature and becomes absolutely free. Nothing can bind him or shake him, and nothing can disturb the peace of his mind. He has no want, no misery, no fear and no cause for strife or grief. His face always beams with divine joy and his conduct marks him out as a man of God. His selfless love flows alike to all. His contact brings strength, purity and solace to all who come near him. Verily such a man has reached the goal of human life, and he alone may be said to be the "perfect man".

Says Sree Krishna:

Duhkheshu anvdwignamanah sukheshu vigatasprihah veetaragabhaya krodhah sthitadheeh muniruchyate,

"He whose mind is not shaken by adversity, who does not hanker after happiness, who has become free from affection, fear and wrath, is indeed the *Muni* of steady wisdom.,' (Gita II. 56)

The world has produced from time to time many such Seers of God in different climes and in different ages. They are the "truly-blessed," the salt of the human race. Out of the fulness of their hearts they preached what they saw and felt. They taught all those who flocked to

them the steps that had led them to realise God.

These teachings comprise the bulk of the religions of the world. The different Seers, however, discovered different methods of cleansing the mind; their teachings are essentially the same, though they may differ in minor respects.

All true religions of the world lead us alike to the same goal, namely, perfection, if of course, they are followed faithfully. Each of them is a correct path to Divinity.

The Hindus have been taught to regard religion in this light; and according to the Hindu view there is nothing wrong with the other religions as have been preached by their respective Prophets or Seers of God. Their teachings are priceless, and they give us a sure and correct lead. Such are the true religions of the World.

Religion is something immensely practical, and one has to put into practice the teachings of the great Seers and Prophets of one's own religion, and regulate one's entire life accordingly. This alone can lead us towards the goal. We have to bring out the Divinity within us and become real men, and for this we have to strive our best. Really we attain Dharma, our true and essential nature, only when God in us becomes fully manifest. And for achieving this end we should spare no pains. Thus,

"Verily he who knows that Supreme Brahman becomes Brahman Itself. In his family none ignorant of the Brahman is born; the knots of his heart being loosened he gets beyond grief and sin aud attains immortality." (Mundak. Up)

All these teachings require explanation, and it has to come from some other Seer of God, one in a position to explain. Hinduism, therefore, advises and in some cases insists on every spiritual aspirant (*sadhak*) to find a Seer to be his spiritual guide or *Guru*.

3

Guru - The Spiritual Guide

The training gained from an enlightened spiritual guide or Guru is the most essential and efficient of all the means available to enable man to achieve God-realisation and Self-realisation as the aim of life. India has fallen almost beyond recognition from those days of her greatness, when unnumbered Sages like Vasishta and Y*a*jna valkya, and Kings like Sree R*a*machandra and Janaka shed an imperishable lustre on her name and gained her the crown of spirituality equally with the sceptre of imperial might among the world's communities. The special mission of man is ever to assist the evolving and living Soul to find the embodiment and environment needed for the attainment of its final goal and destiny, as settled by the Supreme Revelation (*Mahavakya*)-*Tat twam asi*-"That Thou (the nature of the true Self) art." And such attainment is only possible with the advent of the enlightened Guru, who possessing a realised knowledge of the *A*tman, has thereby gained "the power of grace and the gift of love" which alone make for the uplifting of man.

If in modern education, where we chiefly aim at intellectual acquisition and advancement, training under a qualified teacher is indispensable for the making of a truly cultured man, it is much more so in the Vedic system, where the subject-matter of education is one removed from the secular interests of life. The doctrine of *adhikara* (qualification) holds so prominent a place in Hinduism, that it may be said to take the lead among its special features. Moreover, the teacher is chiefly a transmitter of the teaching and the grace (*anugraha*) which he has received from his own Guru; and so he represents a succession which starts with Ishwara at the commencement of creation. In order that his duty as a transmitter may be effectively

done, he has to make out, when performing the ceremony of initiation, what is the spiritual status of the disciple, and to adapt his instruction from time to time to his needs. The Guru's work is thus to result in converting the disciple into the likeness of himself in all essentials-in the knowledge and power of the Spirit. "The man who has an *A*charya (Spiritual teacher) knows (the Atman)." Hence the Sruti says:

"Only that knowledge which is gained from an *A*charya is of the best kind."

"The Guru is he who enables us to cross the sea of ignorance (*ajnana*); his perfect knowledge is like the boat by which one can cross." In fact, the Guru should not only convey to us the purport of the Shastras and make us firm in their practical observance, but should offer in himself a living example of such observance.

Now, to a disciple the Guru's grace is quite needed, as nothing can be gained by the disciple who is unable to secure it. "Learning, wealth, strength and prosperity bear no fruit for those who have not the Guru's grace. They go downward." So says God Shiva to Parvati (Skanda-purana).

A common derivation of the word Guru is the following:

Gukaraschandhakaro Rukarasteja uchyate Ajnana-grasakam Brahma gurureva nasamshayah.

"The letter *Gu* means darkness, and the letter *Ru* the light; the Guru is so-called as he is the remover of darkness, as he is able to remove all intellectual and spiritual darkness." (Guru-Gita)

"Even as a fly sitting on the back of a lion travels over hills and dales, the pupil gets elevated along with the master."

"Just as a blindman taking hold of an unblind guide freely walks his way; as a lame man sitting in a boat is

safely carried ashore by the pilot; and even as the children of the king's servants enjoy all the pleasures of the royal household, albelt the king may not know of them, so does the kind Teacher lead the faithful disciple to the Grace of God."

The Teacher is the pupil's God and worshipping him, he worships God. The only effort required on his part is to seek and place himself under a truly spiritual sage.

Such a discipline will not fail to prosper in this world, for wealth comes voluntarily to him who spurns it, and his spiritual life guarantees salvation after death.

4

Karma

Now, an action is not quite so simple a thing as it seems; it is always preceded by a thought, and a thought is in its turn the result of a desire or *Kama;* that is to say, if one wants or *desires* for a thing he *thinks* how to get it or where to get it and then he *acts.* This is the regular order; every action has a thought behind it; and every thought has a desire behind it. These three things-action, thought and desire-are the three threads twisted as it were into the cord of Karma.

Kamamaya eva ayam purusha iti sayatha kamo bhavati tat kratur bhavati yat kraturbhavati tat karma kurute yat karma kurute tat abhisampadyate.

"The Self is identified with desire alone; what it desires it resolves; what it resolves it works out; and what it works out it attains." (Br. Ar. Up. 4. 4. 5.)

Our actions make the people round us happy or unhappy; if we make them happy we have sown happiness "like a seed," and it grows up into happiness for ourselves; if we make them unhappy we have sown the seed of unhappiness, and it grows up into unhappiness for ourselves.

So also if we do cruel deeds we sow cruelty like a seed, and it grows up into cruelty to ourselves; similarly, kindness and courtesy beget kindness and courtesy also. In other words whatever we sow by our actions comes back to us in the same form.

But *action* has *thought* behind it. Now our thoughts make what is called our *character*, the nature and kind of mind that we have. As we think about a thing a great deal our minds become like that thing. If we think kindly, we become kind; if we think cruelly we become cruel; if we think deceitfully, we become deceitful; if we think honestly we become honest. In this way our character is made by our thoughts, and when we are born again, we shall be born with the character that is being made by our thoughts now. As we act according to our nature or character-as a kind person acts kindly, or a cruel person acts cruelly-it is easy to see that actions in our next life will depend on the thoughts of our present life.

But *thought* has *desire* behind it. Now, desire brings us the object we wish for. As a magnet attracts soft iron, so does desire attract objects If we desire money, we shall have the opportunity of becoming rich in another life. If we desire learning, we shall have an opportunity of becoming learned in another life. If we desire love, we shall have the opportunity of becoming loved. If we desire power, we shall have the opportunity of becoming powerful. This is Karma; and Karma may be summed up in a few words–"A man reaps as he sows."

The student, then, who would make happiness for others and for himself, must look well after his desires, must find out by observation and study which objects in the long run bring happiness, and which bring unhappiness, and must then try, with all his strength, to desire only those things, the outcome of which is happiness.

5

Yajna (Sacrifice)

A unique conception in the Hindu view of life is that every person is born on this earth burdened with a five-fold debt. He owes a debt to the Devas who keep the worlds going; he owes a debt to the Rishis, the inspired Seers of knowledge; he owes a debt to his own Pitris or ancestors, "whose love tingles in every drop of blood in his veins;" he owes a debt to human beings in general (*naras*) and finally he owes a debt to all creatures-*bhutas*-in the world. Every man in his life-time has to pay off everyone of these debts, and he who fails to do so is held guilty of heinous sin, the idea underlying being that all debts contracted in one birth should be paid off in the same birth, as putting it off for the next birth is to vouchsafe or ensure another birth as it were.

All these debts are to be redeemed by sacrifice or yajna, which is considered by the Smritis the most important Dharma of the Hindus.

The debt to the Devas is redeemed by what is called Devayajna-which consists in the performance of certain rites and rituals such as *homa*, worship, fulfilment of vows, austerities and by everything in fact, which is the off-spring of the religious instinct in man. They are the means of recognition of all that we owe to the kindly ministry and protection of those active "Intelligences" working in nature, and the repayment of the debt by giving for their service a share of our possessions. Its inner meaning is the realisation of our relations with the invisible worlds and of interdependence of those worlds on each other.

This yajna teaches us to be in harmony with Nature in accord with all that lives.

The debt to the Rishis is discharged by Rishi-yajna, also called Brahma-yajna-or study of the Vedas or sacred lore, discipline, knowledge and reverence. Everyday a

man should study some sacred book and thus gradually acquire the knowledge, without which he cannot properly understand himself, his position and his duties. And he should ever be ready to impart this knowledge to those who are less learned or more ignorant than himself.

Adhyapanam Brahmayajnah "Teaching constitutes Brahmayajna" (Manu-smriti).

A Dwija should, therefore, daily offer this sacrifice, reading and carefully thinking over some passage or passages from the sacred literature. The carefulness and the closeness of the thought is much more important than the amount read.

The real significance of this yajna is that all study–*adhyayana*, is a sacrifice or yajna, and we learn in order that we may teach–*adhyapana*.

The third debt, the debt to the Pitris or the *manes*, is discharged by begetting a son "in the bonds of holy wedlock" and continuing the line of the ancestors. The outer sacrifice to the Pitris is the *tarpana–pitrayajnastu tarpanam* or offering of water to the older generation of our family, the departed ancestors; the real significance of which is the recognition of the great debt we owe to the past generations of men, who inhabited this earth before us and who toiled and laboured that they might hand it on to posterity in an enriched and improved state.

No man is truly human who does not rocognise the debt he owes to the past, to his ancestors; and the Smritis insist on the annual performance of atleast the Shraddha ceremony in the honor of the departed, even if all other rites should be omitted.

The debt to Man has to be paid off with hospitality (Atithi–poojana), charity and gifts (*dana*) and performance of unselfish deeds of any kind, such as sinking of public wells, building of rest-houses, etc. A true Aryan should feed some one poorer than himself, the significance of

which is service and help to humanity (*Nri-yajna*), as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless and comforting the bereaved.

The gift or Dana should always be given to the poor and deserving and never to the rich. The Dana should be given with a sense of duty to one who can make no return. A good Dana is, therefore one which is given in the right place, at an opportune time, and to a deserving person.

"Fill the poor with money, O Yudhistira, do not pay the rich. Medicine is needed only by the sick and not by the healthy." (Mahabharata)

Also, "To give is right, a gift given with this idea, to one who does no service in return, in a fit place and to a worthy person, that gift is held to be Sattwika." (Gita, XVII. 20)

The last and final debt-that to the *bhutas*-is to be paid off by giving *bali*, that is, by feeding "the birds in the air and the beasts in the field." It is called *bhuta-yajna*. The real signficance of this yajna is the service to those who are beneath us in the human and in the animal kingdoms, the recognition of man's indebtedness to them for their services to him and the practice of kindness and consideration towards them.

"And that beasts and birds, and even the ants, feed in his home on the crumbs, the offerings made to them, washings of utensils, etc. is how he becomes an object of enjoyment to them." (Br. Ar. Up I. 4. 16.)

Mention should, however, be made in this connection of the existence in nature of some form of minute animate agents, (micro-organisms or microbes) such of bacteria, yeast, streptothrix etc., invisible to the naked eye. The upper few inches of the surface soil contain innumerable number of them, but they are very few below the depth of a few feet in an undisturbed soil. Their number, however, is considerably larger in a cultivated soil than in the uncultivated or dry and sandy soil.

The microbes found in the soil are of two types: (1) Saprophytic microbes, or those concerned with the decomposition and disintegration of organic matter, both animal and vegetable; and (2) Pathogenic microbes or disease-producing germs.

The saprophytes are found in greater abundance, and are concerned with the final disposal of all organic matter such as animal excreta, sewage, dead bodies, vegetable matter, etc. If it were not for their presence in the soil, the surface of the earth would have long become clogged with organic refuse, and man's existence would not have been possible. They are thus of interest to man from zoological, industrial and economic aspects; they help man by enriching the soil (by the nitrification of manurial and animal matter), causing decay of refuse matter, fixing the Nitrogen of the air to the nodules of leguminous plants (class of beans and peas), by souring milk, in fermenting sugar and molasses and production of alcohol, and in so many other ways including destruction of the disease-causing microbes. In fact it has been proved by scientists that man could not live on earth except for these microbes.

The popular conception that the presence of bacteria is always associated with disease, is erroneous.

The pathogenic bacteria contained in the soil are, however, much fewer than the saprophytic, as they do not find a suitable medium in the soil for their growth and multiplication, and they die also in the struggle for existence with the saprophytes. But the soil does, however, contain certain bacteria (pathogenic) such as those of Anthrax, Tetanus and Malignant Oedema, which being spore-bearing are more resistant against adverse conditions such as drying, heat etc.

Although few pathogenic bacteria can actually live in the soil for a time, a soil polluted with human and animal

excreta, urine or sputum may come to contain the specific microbes of Typhoid fevers, Dysentery, Epidemic Diarrhœa and Cholera and give rise to these diseases from infected or polluted soil through the medium of water, dust, flies etc. Certain vegetables grown on a polluted soil may communicate, if eaten raw or uncooked, the ova of various intestinal worms, hook-worms and round-worms from the soil to the consumers. Some forms of tape-worm pass part of their life-cycle in the soil. Oysters grown in estuaries into which town-sewage flows, have been known to communicate Typhoid fevers to the consumers, and oysters, it is said, are preferred to be eaten raw.

Mention should here be made of the latest discovery of modern Science–penicillin, the wonder–drug, which has revolutionised modern treatment of disease in man and animals. It is derived from a particular variety of *fungus* (*penicillium notatum*) similar to the growth found on bread and other foodstuffs kept exposed to air and moisture. Most of these *fungi* are poisonous to man and animals except the *penicillium notatum* noted above. On the other hand it is poisonous to certain low forms of life such as germs of disease in man and animals.

The conception of the five-fold yajnas is one of the noblest and most comprehensive conceptions of human duty ever formulated. It reminds man of how inextricably his lot is interwoven with that of everything else in the world, and of how man has ever to keep before him this stupendous fact of interdependence. In a sense it is worship by man of the whole universe. The idea thus teaches man how he ought atlast to sacrifice *himself* for the benefit of others.

Even Creation itself is the greatest sacrifice, where the Creator confines Himself *in matter* in order that a Universe may be made manifest, and immersion in matter is, in the spiritual sense, "death." The Creator thus sacrificed

Himself in order that he might bring into being parts of Himself, which might develop all His powers in matter in infinite variety of forms.

This is the underlying principle of Sacrifice. It gives us a clue to the real meaning of Sacrifice, namely "it is the pouring out of one's life for the benefit of all beings."

Says Sree Krishna:

"Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou offerest in sacrifice, whatever thou givest away, whatever austerity thou practisest, O Son of Kunti, do that as an offering unto Me." (Gita, IX. 27)

"Thus shalt thou be freed from the bondage of actions bearing good and evil results. With the heart steadfast, in the Yoga of renunciation-sacrifice-and liberated thou shalt come unto Me." (Gita, IX. 28)

CHAPTER IX

THE COSMOS AND EVOLUTION

When Iswara, the Supreme One (Saguna Brahma), shines out on *prakriti* (Cosmic energy) and makes it take shapes, the first Forms that appear are those of the Tri-murthis, or the three Aspects of Ishwara manifested to cause the Brahmanda (lit. egg of Brahma), the Cosmos or an orderly system of worlds. That Aspect of His in which He creates the worlds is named Brahma, that in which He preserves and maintains them is named Vishnu, and that in which He dissolves the worlds when they are worn out and of no further use, is Shiva.

Brahma, the Creator, shapes matter into seven *Tattwas* (Elements) as they are called. The first two of them are *Buddhi* (Pure Reason) and *Ahamkara* (Egoism), the principle of separation breaking up matter into tiny particles called atoms. The remaining Five Tattwas are, the *Pancha-*

bhutas, and out of these all things are partly made. There is more *tamoguna* than *rajo* or *sattwaguna* showing itself in the Elements, and so the things composed chiefly of them are dull and inert; the inner life, the *Jiva*, cannot show its powers, for the coat of gross matter is so thick and heavy.

Next, after the Elements, the Five Jn*a*nendriyas are created; these were at first only ideas in the mind of Brahma and later were clothed in the Elements. They are the five centres of the senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste. Next were created the Karmendriyas, the organs of which are the hands, the legs, those of speech, of generation and of excretion. There is more of Rajoguna than Tamoguna and of Sattwaguna showing itself in these Indriyas, so they are very active, and the inner life—the Jiva—can show more of its powers in them.

After the Indriyas, Brahma created in His mind the *Devas*, who are connected with the senses; and also *Manas* (the Mind) which may be called the Sixth Indriya; because it draws into itself and arranges and thinks over all the sensations collected by the Indriyas from the outside world. There is more Sattwaguna than of Tamoguna and Rajoguna showing itself in the Devas and the Manas.

Next Brahma created in his mind the hosts of Dev*a*s, called Sur*a*s, who carry out, administer the laws of Ishwara and see to the proper management of all the worlds. They see that each man gets what he has earned by his Karma, they give success and failure in wordly things according to what one deserves, they help man in many ways, if men properly serve them; and much of the bad weather, sickness and famine and other national troubles come from men entirely neglecting their duties they owe to these Dev*a*s.

The Dev*a*s are a vast multitude under the Five Rulers, Indra, V*a*yu, Agni, Varuna and Kubera. In Dev*a*s Rajoguna predominates. Manu says "Their nature is action."

The Asuras-the enemies of the Devas-are embodiments of Tamoguna and are inactive.

The Creator than created in His mind minerals, plants, animals and man, thus completing the picture of the world wherein the unfolding of the powers of the Jiva-what is now called Evolution-was to take place. In Samskrit this word Evolution or world-process is called Samsara, and it is compared to a wheel which is constantly turning and on which all the Jivas are bound.

Thus Brahma completed His share of the great task of a Universe, but the forms needed to be clothed in physical matter to be made active beings. This was the work of Vishnu. He breathed His life-*prana*-in all the forms and gave them consciousness. Then all the Brahmanda became full of life and consciousness.

Now, what are known as Avataras of Vishnu are His Divine manifestations in some form of flesh to bring about some special result. Thus, (1) With the coming of the Matsya (or the Fish) began the great evolution of animal life in the world, and with (2) Kurma (the Tortoise) the type of the next great step in evolution; (3) Varaha (the Boar) - the type of the great mammalian kingdom which was to flourish on the dry land; and Modern Science recognises these three great stages of evolution each marked in Hinduism by an Avatara; (4) Nara-simha (Man-lion) - came to free the earth from the tyranny of the Daityas; (5) Vamana (Dwarf) came as man to aid in the evolution of the human race. He is known as Trivikrama, as he covered the entire earth in three steps and thus won for man the field of his evolution; (6) Parasurama - He came with an axe to punish the particular sect of the Kshatriyas who were oppressing the people and to teach bad rulers the danger of using power to tyrannise instead of to help; (7) Rama - Sree Ramachandra, an ideal Kshatriya, the model king; He serves as an example of a perfect human

life; He is emphatically the Perfect Man; (8) Sree Krishna, the manifestation of Divine Love and Wisdom; He is the speaker of the Gita; (9) Buddha – Teacher of Truth – is the founder of a mighty faith followed by millions of the human race; and (10) Kalki – This Avat*a*ra will come in future and close the Kaliyuga. When he comes the Satyayuga will return to earth and a new cycle will begin.

The development and perfection of the human type is indicated by these Avat*a*ras.

It should be noted that the Hindu Seers had a clear idea of evolution; Patanjali refers to it as J*a*tyantara-parin*a*ma, i. e., transformation of one genus or species into another. They had a definite idea about its cause, for which modern science may be said to be still groping. They held that one genus or species has within it, potentially, whatever evolves out of it. It is already there in the Prakriti (causal state) of a particular genus or species, and this flows out, as it were, to manifest newer forms, whenever circumstances combine to give it an outlet. It should also be noted that at the back of this evolution lies, according to Hinduism, the Divine Will as its supreme cause. Exclaims Partha, when Sree Krishna, the Great Lord of Yoga showed him His supreme Ishwara Form (Vishwa Rupa):

"I see all the Devas, O Deva, in Thy body, and hosts of all grades of beings; Brahma, the Lord seated on the lotus and all the Rishis and celestial serpents." (Gita XI-15).

"I see the Rudras, *A*dityas, Vasus, S*a*dhy*a*s, Vishva-Dev*a*s, the two Ashvins, Maruts, Ushmap*a*s (the Pitris) and hosts of Gandharvas, Yakshas, Asuras and Siddhas – all these are looking at Thee, all quite astounded."

(Ibid XI–22)

2

Hindu Conception of the Universe

Hinduism holds that Sristi (Creation – Brahm*a*nda)

has no beginning in time and that each Srishti is preceded by Pralaya (Dissolution) and that each Pralaya by Srishti, and this has been going on eternally. Now, why does this happen? The Shastras declare that there is a causal link between Pralaya and Srishti. The inexorable (relentless) law of Karma forges this link. This law, according to Hinduism is the Supreme Law of causation that determines each Srishti and everything within it. The actions, the experiences and the desires of the Jivas of the previous cycle (*kalpa*) lie in the causal state during the state of Dissolution. And it is for the fruition of these that during creation all Jivas (beginning with Hiranyagarbha) come into being together with their various habitations (*lokas*) and materials for their use like food, drink, etc. They are to experience pain and pleasure according to their bad or good karmas performed during the previous cycle. It is for this that they come and are surrounded by myriads of objects of experience. Thus in Pralaya lies the seed out of which the Brahmanda shoots up like a tree. As a tree is preceded by a seed, again the seed by a tree, so also is Sristi preceded by Pralaya and Pralaya by Sristi.

The Jivas hold the centre of the stage. They are to reap the fruits of their action through experience (*bhoga*), and that is why the entire universe comes into existence. Hence the latter is resolved into 2 constituent groups: (1) the subjects (the enjoyers, *bhokta*) and (2) objects of experience (*bhogya*). The Jivas belong to the bhokta group and all other things to the latter. From this view-point the Brahmand or *jagat* is characterised by these two groups of entities, the sentient (having the power of sense perception) and the insentient. The Jivas experience the world through the senses of knowledge (jnanendriyas), which are so many instruments of perception. Each of these instruments conveys to the Jivas a particular aspect of the world of experience, and this is said to be its *Vishaya* or object of

perception. The Jnanendriyas, namely, ears, skin, eyes, tongue and nose have sound, touch, colour, taste and smell as their respective *vishayas*. These five classes of sense-perceptions are all that the Jivas are concerned with in the external world. These practically compose their entire external world of experience (*bhogya*).

Now the sense-perceptions are produced only when the senses are stirred up by stimuli from the external world. Light waves, for instance, stimulate the eyes to produce the sense-perception of colour (*rupa*), gross *akasha* stirs up the perception of sound and touch, *tejas* of those of sound, touch and colour, *Ap* of all these plus taste (*rasa*) and *Kshiti* of all the 5 *vishayas* including smell. It should be noted that each succeeding *bhuta* in the series stirs up the sensation of one more vishaya than the preceding bhuta; this aditional one is said to be its special property (guna). Thus, sound is the special property of *akasha*, touch of *vayu*, colour of *tejas*, taste of *ap* and smell of *kshiti*.

These gross bhutas are thus looked upon as different groups of sense-stimuli. They are of the nature of energy and not of matter. Though their names suggest physical entities like ether, air, fire, water and earth they are nothing but modes of Prakriti, the infinite Cosmic Energy. From this view-point physical existence is absolutely non-material. The look of matter is deceptive.

Thus before the analytical vision of the Hindu Seers the entire Universe came to be resolved into subjects of experience (*bhokta*) and objects of experience (bhogya), the experience of external objects again into five classes of sense-perception, and the external world into five groups of sense-stimuii known as the gross bhutas. The analysis, therefore, is purely psychological and not physical.

The scientist's division of the world into elements and their atoms, on the other hand, has already become

meaningless. The atoms are no longer held as ultimate constituents of matter. They have been resolved into energy-units (Electrons, protons,[1] etc.). The analytical approach of the physicist has penetrated the deceptive outlook of matter. Matter has become dematerialised. It may be noted that this finding of modern science has gone a step ahead towards confirming the Hindu view of Nature.

"It is a truly wonderful picture of the universe that Science has also given to us. On the one hand, are the astronomical distances in space, the farthest visible bodies being separated from us by a hundred million light-years (a light-year is the distance travelled by light in one year at the rate of 1,86,000 miles a second). No less than two million stars are visible to us, including the galaxies, each one of which is itself an island universe. Science tells us that this vast universe must have had a beginning at some remote point of time. Withal, according to Einstein and his followers space is finite and bounded, and gets continually expanding. It reminds one of the Hindu idea of the Cosmos as Brahm*a*nda or the egg of Brahma, and of the meaning of the root *brih* which indicates growth and expansion. On the other hand, science takes us into the region of the infinitely minute, the world of electrons which comprise miniature solar systems in themselves, and the world of ultra-microscopic life like that of the filter-passing viruses. What finer and more compact des-

1. We know not what the release of the titanic energy locked within the infinitely small compass of an atom will accomplish. Scientists maintain that it will be possible to take 100,000 ton Atlantic liner from Europe to America and back on the energy of one tumblerful of water! In terms of man-power, it would need over ten millions oarsmen to do the job. (Motwani-Science and Society in India-P. 38) The huge atom-smasher, Cyclostron of Dr. Ernest Lawrence has transformed platinum into gold and given off more radio-active particles than the world's entire supply of Radium. (Ibid. P. 53).

cription of this whole could we desire than the *anoraneeyan mahatomaheeyan* of the Upanishads?[1] A new scientific mysticism seems to be growing up under our very eyes, associated with the names of Einstein, Eddington, Jeans* and others for whom the stuff of the world is comparable to the mind-stuff. Other concepts of a non-mechanical nature have been offered to us from the fields of biology and psychology to account for the whole range of phenomena in a satisfactory manner; e. g., the Life-force of vitalists, the *elan vital* of Bergson, the Cosmic Unconscious of Broad, and the *libido* of the psycho-analysts." (Guru Dutt-A Hindu View of Culture).

What is Mind? "No matter."
What is Matter? "Never mind."

3

Mythology in general aims at inspiring one through precepts and laudable examples to strive to pitch up one's life to the highest ideal. It consists of stories, parables and legends with or without any historical basis. Some of these are allegorical, some are full of poetic imagery, some are narrations of certain events of the legendary past. Through them all, however, the abstract and highly subtle ideas of a religion are successfully conveyed to the mass-mind. The abstract teachings are concretised, so to say, and made highly interesting and impressive through the garb of stories.

Such a technique was in use among the Hindus even as early as the days of the Vedic Brahmanas. In these are found *Itihasas* (myths and legends), Puranas (cosmo-

1. Kath-Up. II. 20.

*Sir James Jeans, the famous Astronomer died on 16th September, 1946 at Dorking, Surrey. He was "one of the Six greatest men" according to Sir Oliver Lodge.

genic myths) *Gatas* (epic song-verses), etc. In course of time a distinct literature along this line grew up and swelled in volume comprising the Hindu mythology.

The bulk of this literature may be classified as narrated poetry, some like the R*a*m*a*yana and the Mah*a*bh*a*rata being of the order of epics. This is why it has been an admirable vehicle for conveying the lofty and abstract ideas and ideals of Hinduism straight to the hearts of the masses. And it has been used in this way since the days of the Vedic Br*a*hman*a*s. In those days the recital of narrative poems formed a part of religious ceremonies. They would also be recited or sung at the Court of Kings by bards (Sootas),* and even the hermits would assemble, we read, in a secluded place and spend the rainy season listening to the recitals of Pur*a*nas and Itih*a*sas. Such a custom in some form or other persists even to our day; and every religious or social function is very often attended by a dramatic presentation of some part of Hindu mythology, or recital and exposition of the same as Kirtan, Harikath*a* or K*a*lakshepams; thus, through the ages the lofty ideals and ideas of Hinduism have been conveyed through impressive stories and inspiring historical facts to every stratum of the Hindu society. It is by this consistent and stupendous effort carried on through milleniums that the mass-mind has been thoroughly saturated with Hindu ideas and ideals. And though the highly abstract ideas may be beyond the reach of many, they are atleast acquainted with some figurative versions of the same, which is enough to stir up in them an earnestness in religious pursuit. "Really, mythology acts like a lever in lifting up the mass-mind to spiritual heights," it stamps on the mass-mind the fundamentals of Hindu faith regarding God, Nature and the Soul.

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* Soota Pur*a*nik in the Naimisharanya lecturing to Shaunaka and other Sages (Bh*a*gavat)

Samsara

The word "Samsara" is very significant, and although most of us are familiar with it, we hardly know its real meaning, but use the word rather loosely to indicate either the world or worldiness.

The word is derived from the Samskrit root, (*sri*), which means passing, and its prefix, (*sam*) means intensely. Now our Scriptures, Shastras, teach us that we have to pass repeatedly through this world and other finer and higher worlds:

Abrahma bhuvanat lokah punaravartino Arjuna, Mamupethyatu Kounteya punarjanma navidyate. (Gita. VIII. 16)

"From the realm of the Great Brahma downwords all the worlds are subject to return (re-birth), O Arjuna, but after attaining Me, O son of Kunti, there is no re-birth."

This repeated "passing" of Souls (*samsriti*) is what is really meant by Samsara.

The whole of Hinduism takes its stand on this idea of Samsara. And it gives a clue to the entire Hindu view of life. Why should we perform shraddha ceremony (Pitri-yajna) of our departed relations? Because we believe that they are "still living" either in any of the finer worlds, Pitri-loka and Deva-loka or in this earth (*manushya-loka*) in some other bodies. Why does a Hindu woman take the vow of widow-hood after the death of her husband? Because she hopes to meet her husband after her death provided, of course, she remains faithful to him.

The Hindus perform meritorious deeds (*shubha-karma, punya-karma*), as these, they believe, will bring them intense enjoyment after death; similarly they try to shun heinous deeds (*papa*), lest they should have intense suffering after death.

These and many other beliefs and rites are derived from the Hindu idea of re-birth. And this idea is no

fiction. It rests on facts realised by the Hindu Seers, the Sages of yore.

We shall not cease to exist after death. "Before this birth" says Sree Krishna to Arjuna, "all of us passed through innumerable lives; both you and I have had many births before this; only I know them all, while you do not."

Bahooni me vyateetani janmani tava cha Arjuna tanyaham veda sarvani natwam vettha Parantapa. (Gita. IV. 5)

Indeed one is born in this world again and again till the Divinity within him is completely manifest. Each time one is born he is born with a new body, which lasts for only a short time and then wears off and dies. But that which resides within the body remains as fresh as ever; it simply moves out of the decayed and useless body and remains for a time in the finer worlds; after that it is born again, that is to say, it comes to this world of ours and gets a fresh body.

The finer worlds are meant for intense enjoyment or suffering and constitute the *bhogabhumi* or the land of experience. But it is to this Earth that everyone has to come in body in order to work out his perfection. Our world is, therefore, designated as *karma-bhumi* or the land of action. So long as one does not attain perfection, one is bound to go through repeated births: till then one is in a state of bondage (*baddha*); the necessity of passing over and over through the worlds (*samsara*) is itself the bondage (*bandhana*).

At each birth we get a fresh body. This body is made of matter and is called *sthula-sharira* (gross-body). Being built out of the materials taken as food, it is also called *anna-mayakosha*, a casing or sheath made of food materials. This gross-body is our outermost cover, and one lives in this body just as one lives in a house; when the house collapses, one gets out of it and builds another house to live in. So also when this gross-body becomes useless, one

leaves it and builds a fresh body. The Gita, however, compares this changing of body to the putting on of new garments in place of the old:

Vasamsi jeernani yatha vihaya navani grihnati naroparani, tatha shareerani vihaya jeernanyannyani samyati navani Dehee.

"Even as a man casts off worn-out clothes and puts on others which are new, so the embodied (the Indweller, the Soul) casts off worn-out bodies and enters into others which are new." (Gita II. 22.)

(As a person only puts off the old garment when he has already secured the new one, so the embodied is already entering a new body in the act of leaving the old. The comparison is to the movement of a leech (*trinajala yuka*) which has already established a new foot-hold before leaving the old.)

Yatha trinajalayuka trinasyantham gatwa anyam akramam akramya atmanam upasamharati tatha.

(Br. Ar. Up. 4. 4. 3)

According to the Vedanta doctrine, the embodiment of the living soul in its next incarnation is always foreshadowed in the self-consciousness at the last moment or movements of its present incarnation. Thus,

"Remembering whatever object, at the end, he leaves the body, that alone is reached by him, O son of Kunti, (because) of his constant thought of that object."

(Gita VIII. 6)

This giving up of a decayed and useless body is what we call "death," and re-appearance in a fresh body as "re-birth." Thus, death and re-birth simply mean the change of worn-out bodies for fresh ones. Compare:

"Death so-called, is but other matter dressed.
In some new form. And in a varied vest,
From tenement to tenement though tossed,
The Soul is still the same,
The figure only lost." (*Dryden*).

Now, everyone of us has gone through births and deaths times without number. Those who have realised this truth have nothing to fear or grieve for. Says the Gita:

"Of that which is born, death is certain; of that which is dead, re-birth is certain. Over the unavoidable, therefore, thou oughtest not to grieve, O Arjuna." (Gita II. 27)

Inside this gross-body we have yet another finer but stronger body, in which we live. This is called the *Sukshma-sharira*, the finer body. Neither disease, nor old age, nor death can affect this fine body. Nothing in Nature can destroy it. Through countless births our fine bodies have been our constant companions.

The fine body consists of 17 parts; viz., *buddhi* (intellect), *manas* (mind), five *pranas* (vital energy), and the finer counterparts of the sense-organs, – (1. *Jnanendriyas* or organs of perception – eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. 2. *Karmendriyas* or organs of action – hands, feet, tongue, organs of elimination and organs of re-production.)

It is this fine body that builds up the gross one and keeps it going; through it we feel, think and desire. Indeed this fine body is the active part of our being.

Yet the fine body is not active by itself; it is as inert as the gross body, though the latter is animated and made by something else. That something is the true Self of man, the Jivatma, the Soul.

The *A*tman is the source of all life, activity and consciousness (*chaitanya*). Warmed up with life by its touch, the fine body animates the gross one, just as the Moon illumined by the Sun lights up this Earth. Regarding the *A*tman, the Gita says: (II. 30).

"This (Atman) the Indweller in the bodies of all, is ever indestructible." Again,

"This (Self) cannot be cut, nor burnt, nor wetted, nor dried. Changeless, all-pervading, immovable, the Self is eternal, the same for ever." (Gita. II. 24)

Thus animated by the *Atman* the fine body works the grosser one as long as it can and then leaves it and builds up a fresh body. In this way we proceed from birth to birth.

CHAPTER X

KARMAVADA

Now, why has one to be born again and again? We have seen that the Divinity in man reveals Itself only when the mind becomes spotlessly clean; and that this cleansing process takes a long long time indeed. One gross body cannot last long and our life-time is too short. Hence it is that we have to pass through innumerable gross bodies or births before the cleansing of the mind can be fully accomplished.

Now, there are so many things in this world that please our senses and so many others that are repellent to them. Hence we desire to have certain things, and we avoid certain others. Our minds are always full of such desires. To fulfil these desires we exert ourselves; in fact, our whole life consists of such exertions. Yet we can never exhaust them; they go on multiplying. When we fulfil our desires the hunger of our senses for enjoyment becomes keener; and this gives rise to a crop of fresh desires. Thus we go on doing things for fulfilling our never-ending desires. In fact, the desire for wealth grows with its possession, as "the horns of a cow grow with the cow." Now, whatever we do in this way is sure to bring us either pleasure or pain as its effect. Each deed (*karma*) is destined to bear fruit (*karmaphala*) sooner or later. A good or meritorious deed (*shubha-karma*) brings pleasure as its effect, and an evil deed (*ashubha-karma, papa-karma*) brings pain. Men usually have both good and bad desires; these lead them to

perform both meritorious and evil deeds, and thus to pile up both pleasure and pain as their consequence (*karma-phala*).—"One reaps what one sows."

During each life-time we exhaust only a portion of our past *karma-phala*, and this portion we call *prarabdha*. The remainder that has to be tasted in this life or in future lives is called *samchita*. The fruits of our present deeds will lie stored up as *kriyamana*. Hence for reaping the fruits of our own actions we have to go from birth to birth.

Suppose a child is born blind; his defect is surely the effect of some physical cause; but his mental agony owing to his blindness must, according to the Hindu Shastras, be ascribed to some particular misdeed or sin of any of his previous lives. When inspite of our best efforts we fail in any of our endeavours, we usually curse our fate (*adrista*); on the other hand, when without any effort we meet with an unexpected success, we hail the same *adrista* with delight.

This *adrista* (unseen, unobservable) however, is nothing but the fruit of our own past actions, our own *karma-phala*. We need neither curse it nor hail it. *Adrishta* therefore comes as a matter of course, and is a sure result of our past *Karma;* in other words, we cannot avoid the pleasure or pain caused by our own acts during our past lives. We have produced tbem; "we have made the bed and we must lie on it;" we have no right to curse anything or anybody for our grief and ailments.

But we can do one thing. We can make our future lives happy. That depends on our present efforts. We are the builders of our own future. If we avoid the evil deeds prohibited (*nishedha*) by the Shastras, and go on performing good deeds only as enjoined or sanctioned (*vidhi*) by the Shastras, then we can surely have a happy future.

This, in short, is what Hinduism teaches us about *Karmavada;* our desires (*Kama*) lead us to action (*Karma*); *Karma* produces its fruits (*phala*) as pain or pleasure accord-

ing to the kind of action and in order to reap the fruits of the *karmas* we have to go from birth to birth on Earth – *karmabhumi*. In this way our desires whirl us through the almost interminable round of births and deaths that we call *samsara*. Says the Enlightened Goutama, The Buddha, in whose time the Doctrine of Karma and Re-incarnation received particular emphasis:

"The Books say well, my Brothers! Each man's life
The outcome of his former living is;
The bygone wrongs bring forth sorrows and woes,
The bygone right breeds bliss.

"That which ye sow ye reap. See yonder fields!
The sesamum was sesamum, the corn
Was corn. The Silence and the Darkness knew!
So is a man's fate born.

"He cometh, reaper of the things he sowed,
Sesamum, corn, so much cast in past birth;
And so much weed and poison-stuff, which mar
Him and the aching earth

"If he labour rightly, rooting these,
And planting wholesome seedings where they grow,
Fruitful and fair and clean the ground shall be,
And rich the harvest due.

"This is the doctrine of Karma. Learn!
Only when all the dross of sin is quit,
Only when life dies like a white flame spent
Death dies along with it."

* * * *

"Ask of the sick, the mourners, ask of him
Who tottereth on his staff, lone and forlorn,
"Liketh thee life?"–these say the babe is wise
That weepeth, being born."

Edwin Arnold—The Light of Asia

The Law of Karma thus explains how the Soul, which is immortal, comes to be again and again in body, that is, born on Earth in order to work out the individual's past Karma, and why sometimes evidently deserving people get failures and unhappiness in life, while the undeserving seem to succeed and obtain great many pleasures of life; and concludes that Destiny or *Daiva* or *Adrishta* (in the sense of unobservable *karma*) is not a mere accident or chance happening in one's life, nor is it something imposed on man from outside, but that it is due to the past karma, and being the effect of past *karma*, it (the *Daiva*) possesses the potent force of that *karma*. Now, just as even a small fire when fanned by wind becomes highly powerful, so does Destiny (or Fate) become highly powerful, highly potent, when aided by individual effort (*purushakara*).

On the other hand, just as the light in a lamp diminishes by lessening the supply of oil, so by the abatement of exertion or effort the influence of Fate is also diminished. Thus,

Nalasa prapnuvantyartham nacha daiva parayanah, tasmat sarvaprakarena pourushe yatnamacharet.

"Neither the lazy, nor those who are solely fatalistic obtain their objects. Therefore, one should by all means persist in self-effort." (Matsyapurana)

Asthe bhaga aseenasya oordhwam tisthati tisthatah, shete nipadhyamanasya charati charato bhagah.

"The fate of him who sits also sits, of him that stands also stands, of him that lies down also lies down, and of him that actively moves also moves."

Nahi suptasya simhasya pravishanti mukhe mrigah.

"Certainly no animals do enter the mouth of a sleeping lion!"

Now, "The fulfilment of an action," says Yajnavalkya, "rests equally on *Daiva* and *purushakara; Daiva* is the manifestation of the *purushakara* or actual human effort of

the past life. The two, therefore, are like the wheels of a chariot; and as with one wheel alone there can be no motion for the chariot, so without human effort, Destiny will not get fulfilment." (Yajnavalkya Smriti)

Daive purushakarecha Karmasiddhih vyavasthita, tatra daivam abhivyaktam paurusham paurva dehikam. Yatha hi ekena chakrena rathasya nagatirbhavet evam purushakarena vina daivam na siddhyati.

In this sense, therefore, human effort or exertion itself is able to direct the course of Destiny.

We know by a natural law that water finds its own level, but when it is wanted for use at a higher level we must put a dam across to raise its level and turn it to our advantage.

Now, if *Karma* is the cause of the bondage of the individual into the chain of *Samsara*, it may be suggested that the best remedy against this *Samsara* and its concomitant entanglements, which continue *ad infinitum*, would be to cease doing any *Karma* at all! This is the conclusion to which a partial or incomplete understanding of the implications of the Karma-Theory would lead; and in fact some Western scholars have been led to find such meaning in the Karma-Theory. They contend that the Theory in solving the problem of existence leads either to the philosophy of *inaction* or to a *fatalistic view.*

But such a view is far from what the Hindu thinkers ever intended to expound. In fact it has always been recognised and clearly pointed out by them that it is impossible for a person to be without *karma* even for a moment. And the Gita has given us an exposition of the Karma-Theory in the clearest possible terms, as being a life full of activity, deprecating all philosophies that preach a life of inaction.

"Verily none can ever rest for even an instant without performing action; for, all (all men living under bondage)

are made to act, helplessly indeed, by the Gunas, born of Prakriti." (Gita III. 5)

Even the Great Sree Krishna Himself had nothing to achieve for Himself; nor was there anything for Him to gain that He had not already gained; and yet He followed the Path of active life or Karma-Yoga, for the Great Ones set an example to the rest of mankind.

So, then, the problem before the Hindu is: That Karma could not be avoided-and should not be attempted to be avoided either. Therefore, a remedy has to be thought out whereby the effects of Karma will not be such as to entangle the Soul into the ceaseless round of more births and more Karmas one after another. This is sought to be achieved by imposing two kinds of discipline upon the activities of man, one in regard to the *kinds* of *karma* that should be performed, and the other in regard to the *manner* in which they are to be performed: (1) As to the kinds of Karma, only the right kinds should be performed by man, such as are described and prescribed by the Scriptures in terms of *swadharma;* that is to say, duties and obligations and limitations governing the action of man according to his *Varna, Ashrama* and *Kula.* In following one's own Dharma faithfully it is even said: "Better is one's own Dharma however imperfect it may appear, than the Dharma of another though well-performed. Better is death in one's own Dharma; the Dharma of another is fraught with fear." (Gita III. 35)

Shreyan swadharmo vigunah paradharmat swanusthitat, swadharme nidhanam shreyah paradharmo bhayavahah.

In other words, it is dangerous to perform that Karma, which is not consistent with one's Dharma. For, evidently, if the previous Karmas of individuals are different in different cases, their effects in terms of Destiny subsequently influencing them in this life, are also bound to be different. And in that case the methods of counter-acting these

different expressions of Destiny will also have to be different for different individuals. Therefore it is advised that one should perform only such duties as are suited to one's own Dharma. These duties, says the Gita, are distributed among the four *varnas* according to the *Gunas* born of their own nature; that is, according to Karma or habits and tendencies formed by desire, action and associations in the past life, manifesting themselves in the present life as effects, which we call Destiny.

Says Sree Krishna :

"The duties of the different varnas are distributed according to the Gunas born of their own nature."

(Gita XVIII. 41.)

"The control of the mind and the senses, austerity, purity, forbearance and also uprightness, knowledge. realisation, belief in a hereafter, – these are the duties of the Brahmins, born of (their own) nature." (Ibid XVIII. 42)

"Prowess, boldness, fortitude, dexterity and also not flying from battle, generosity and sovereignty are the duties of the Kshatriyas, born of (their own) nature."

(Ibid XVIII. 43)

"Agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade are the duties of the Vaishyas born of (their own) nature; and action consisting of service is the duty of the Sudras, born of (their own) nature." (Ibid XVIII. 44)

"Devoted each to his own duty according to his own nature man attains the highest perfection."

(Ibid XVIII. 45)

The *A*pasthamba Dharma-Sh*a*stra says: "Men of several castes and orders, each devoted to his respective duties, reap the fruits of their actions after death, and then by the residual *karma* attain to births in superior countries, castes and families, possessed of comparatively superior Dharma, span of life, learning, conduct, wealth, happiness and intelligence." (Swami Swarup*a*nand).

"From whom is the evolution of all beings, by whom all this is pervaded, worshipping Him with his own exertions a man attains perfection." (Gita XVIII. 45)

* * * *

(2) The second discipline is as regards the attitude, the spirit, the mentality or the understanding with which the Karmas as laid down by *swadharma*, should be carried out. They are to be carried out without any motive of securing particular gains or profit. Says the Gita (II-47):

Karmani eva adhikaraste ma phaleshu kadachana, ma Karmaphala heturbhooh ma te sango astu akarmani.

"Thy right is to work only, but never to the fruits thereof. Be thou not the producer of the fruits of (thy) actions; neither let thy attachment be towards inaction." That is to say, do not work with any desire for results; for actions produce fruits or bondage only if they are performed with desire, and subject the Soul to the series of births and deaths. Actions, therefore, have to be carried out in a spirit of sacrifice - yajna or self-surrender - as it is called. And this self-surrender must be thorough in the sense, that a *higher purpose* has to be recognised in all our actions, and with reference to that purpose our actions are to be performed. They are to be performed as dedications to the Supreme Spirit. This dedication is known as *Brahmarpana* or *Ishwararpana*.

"He who does actions forsaking attachment, resigning them to the Brahman, is not soiled by evil, like unto a lotus-leaf not touched by water." (Gita V. 10)

All dedication to God after any ritual is effected thus:

Kayena vacha manasa indriyairwa buddhya atmanava prakritih swabhawat karomi etat sakalam Parasmai Narayanaya iti samarpaye tat.

"Whatever I do by my body, speech, mind, senses, intellect, soul or by the bent of my nature-all that I

dedicate to the Supreme N*a*r*a*yana." The Gita also expresses the same idea in the following words: (Gita V. 11)

"Devotees in the path of work perform action, only with body, mind, senses and intellect forsaking attachment for the purification of the heart."

[*"Only* with" means, "without egotism or selfishness"; it applies to body, mind, senses and intellect.]

(Now, Karma primarily means action, but a much profounder meaning has come to be attached to it, namely, "the destiny forged by one in one's past birth," that is, the store of tendencies, impulses, characteristics and habits laid by, which determines the future embodiment, environment and the whole of one's organisation.

Another meaning of Karma often used in reference to one's caste (Varna) or position in life (*A*shrama) is *duty*, the course of conduct which one ought to follow in persuance of the tendencies which one acquired in one's past, with a view to work them out and regain the pristine purity of the Self.)

Philosophically, Karma signifies *the law of causation;* in Science this law is applied to the physical universe. Indian Philosophy applies it to the mental and moral planes as well, as the just *law of compensation and retribution.*

"As a man soweth so shall he reap", we read in the Hebrew Scriptures; and Manu declares, "Thou canst not gather what thou dost not sow. As thou dost plant the tree so will it grow."

The Greek idea of *Nemesis* has its origin in some phase of the law of retribution, which finds recognition in nearly all the religions of the World.

Our enjoyments and our sufferings, our knowledge and our ignorance, our experiences of happiness or misery, are of our own making-the effects of our good or evil karmas. And it follows our characters also are our own creations.

Emmanuel Kant (1724-1804), the German Philosopher

in discussing the moral order of the universe, says very truly, that happiness is the result of virtuous deeds, and suffering arises from sin. Then, in pointing to the actual facts as they exist in this world, he declares that want of virtue does not result in want of happiness, nor is virtue always unaccompanied by suffering He explains the apparent injustice in this contrarity by admitting that the soul continues to exist after death, and that in the next world justice is meted out, the virtuous being rewarded with happiness and the sinful punished with suffering. This he calls the postulate of Practical Reason.

Thus one great Western philosopher assumes a moral universe in which the law of justice and compensation operates through the continuity of the Soul after death. The Hindu law of Karma or causation assumes not only the continuity of the Soul in a future life, but also its continuity from a beginningless past. Thus,

"This (the Soul) is unborn, eternal, changeless, ever-Itself. It is not killed when the body is killed." (Gita II. 20)

The Karma-Theory thus implies:

(1) That every action, (including spoken word and thought or action performed with body, mind, senses and intellect) is followed by a reaction. Nothing done by the individual can escape being credited or debited as the case may be, to his account; and hence he can never disown them.

(2) That so long as man continues karmas without any method or system or discipline in their performance, he has to be born again and again to atone for their effects and even to create new karmas. Therefore it is that only the right kinds of karma are advised to be performed; that is to say, Karmas consistent with one's own Dharma. In other words, man should follow his Swadharma in order to control his future karmas and future life; only thus can he counteract his past karma and safe-guard himself from the future effects of that Karma.

Evidently such a philosophy of life is far from the "rigid determinism or fatalism," which critics have tried to make of the Karma Theory. The fact that our deeds (including thoughts and words), whether past or present affect our lives, and in that sense do determine the shape of our lives to some extent, is here admitted. Nevertheless the imposition of particular disciplines in life and conduct further implies that it is within our power to alter the effect of Karma, (which now becomes our destiny) by better Karmas.

This, infact, is the rational philosophy of life, which asserts that we can never disown our actions once they are done, but surely we can counteract them if we have the Will to do so. And the "Freedom of the Will" has the fullest scope in choosing the ways and means of such counteraction. Indeed, the Will had also the fullest scope before we chose those karmas, which have now been responsible for our present destiny; and therefore virtually it may be said that "it is *we ourselves who have chosen* our destiny, or who have determined what our destiny in the present should be." So the whole question resolves itself into:

"If karma is denoted by action, its reaction, which, as reaction, is naturally *not* within our control but infact may control us, is destiny or *Daiva;* but there is yet the power within us of counter-action, which is by *sukarma* (or good deeds) and *swadharma.*" (Valavalkar).

2
"Destiny and Free Will"

In actual life Prarabdha can be said to only create desires, thoughts or tendencies in a person, but the task of accomplishing them is entirely the province of the Will-Power, which is fully competent to accept or reject or modify those desires, thoughts or tendencies. The extent

or degree to which the Will-Power can act depends upon the strength of the Prarabdha in creating desires. If Prarabdha is weak it is an easy matter for the Will-Power to combat it; if Prarabdha is strong, however much the Will-Power may try, it will be of no use; and if, however, the Prarabdha is middling, success or failure entirely depends on the strength of the Will-Power. This can be explained by the following oft-quoted illustration:

A buffalo is tethered by a rope to a pole fixed in the ground; it can be near the pole, or can go to the full extent of the rope, or go only to some extent of the rope; and if it is very strong, it can even break the rope and escape from the bondage.

In this example, the buffalo being tied by the rope is Prarabdha; its going to the full extent of the rope or staying near the pole is in its entire discretion or Will-Power; the breaking of the rope by its superior effort and strength is the breaking of Prarabdha or obtaining salvation or liberation from Samsara–the cycle of births and deaths.

Next, it becomes imperative to know the quality and the quantity of the Prarabdha; this is completely dealt with in Astrology and Ayurveda. Astrology is nothing but a Science which shows the relative strengths of Prarabdha and Will-Power, and says how one can improve himself or allow himself to go down; it shows the tendencies and the back-ground of the mind in various ways both in the material and spiritual fields. In fine, it shows the scope of the various events which are likely to happen in one's life. It indicates the duration of life and fixes the maximum and the minimum, and the chances of living to a very ripe old age by practising Yoga or the use of rasayanas (tonics), or the possibilities of disease attacking the body and also the remedial measures. By thus knowing the possibilities of the events of life and also the good and bad periods of life, one can guard himself against evil and take the

fullest advantage of any propitious time; one can also avert evil by the performance of Dhyana or meditation of God, or *Shanti* for the propitiation of the planets.

Ayurveda and Astrology more or less supplement each other. The former says what particular diseases are likely to attack and gives the astrological combinations indicating them and the remedial measures-such as Dhyana to God and Shanti for planets-to be adopted. It says, however, that medicine should be the last resort for curing disease. In this connection the following extract from the Introduction to Sarvartha Chintamani of Prof. B Suryanarayana Rao of Bangalore, will be interesting:

"Many promises are made by men in the course of their lives, but they are not fulfilled. The impressions of sound are always stored in our favour or against us as we fulfil or break our promises.

"When the dissolution of the body sets in the finer and more spiritual portion goes away with the etherial records, and has to account for it in the future births for the various promises it has to his credit. When the molecules join together and the integrating processes begin to produce human body they do so with the previous liabilities attached to them.

"A knowledge of what those impressions were in the previous birth and how they work now is clearly indicated to us by the rays of the various planets expressed in the technical knowledge of the astrological symbols. Planets therefore, appear to be indicators, and it is perfectly within the sphere of man to know the evil results of such previous acts and take suitable remedies to avert them, or to allow natural laws to operate upon him without the slightest attempt on his part to stem such evil currents."

A charge is often laid against the law of Karma, that it leaves no room for social service. If each man's pleasure or pain is of his own making (being the direct result of

his deeds or misdeeds) why should another interfere to mitigate his suffering? On the contrary, the law of Karma implies that inspite of having the power to relieve another's suffering, a person does not exercise it, he creates a bad karma for himself; and that when a man in pain finds help, he finds help also because of his good deed. Thus, the law urges every man to perform good deeds and to exert himself to overcome his own misdeeds.

To the Theosophist, Karma in the moral world is the "immortality of deeds", and a thought, which is a mental deed, is an energy, and if we apply to the moral world the law of conservation of energy that holds good in the physical world we shall come to understand the immense importance of thought as a factor for good or evil.

"For, thoughts are just as real in the moral world as deeds are in the material realm. "Even wasted smoke remains not traceless" A harsh word uttered in past lives is not destroyed, but ever comes again. A thought, as Plato said, is an entity, it is indeed a vibration in the Chitt*a*k*a*sha, the mind-stuff, and has a persistence.

"Karma in the purely mental world, (in that world where desires, passions and emotions are not mingled with mentation) acts very powerfully. Indeed Thought and Will in those lofty regions are "creative" and as a matter of fact "to will is to effect" and results follow immediately."

Says, Sree Shamkara (Dw*a*dashamanjari):

"O ignorant man, Remove the thirst for hoarding money, cultivate good thoughts in your mind, avoid avarice, perform good actions, have dispassion. Feel contented with whatever money you earn by virtue of your own Karma, your own duty."

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CHAPTER XI

MUKTI (Liberation)

We have seen how our desires drag us through repeated births and deaths - Samsara, and that we have no option in the matter. And as long as we shall be seeking the pleasures of this world or of the next, we shall be forced to go through this journey, which seems to be an endless affair and is painful too.

The world offers many pleasant things no doubt, but they never give us satiety (*tripti*, contentment). No attainment is enough for us. Whatever be our position in life, we want more power, more knowledge, more happiness. This desire goes on increasing and gives us no rest. The thought of achieving something haunts us always and makes us feel uneasy. Moreover, along with sense-enjoyment we have to carry a very heavy burden of sorrow. Failure and disappointment, loss and separation, disease and death have to be endured by all.

But, is there no possible escape from, or a way out, of this continued misery and frustration? There is a way out, for so assert the Hindu Scriptures. In other words, we can do away with all our miseries, but this is effected by realising God. For, then alone we shall find what we have been seeking for all along, namely, Eternal Bliss and Infinite Knowledge, (*Sat*, *Chit*, and *Ananda*). Says the Gita (VIII. 16):

"After attaining Me, O Son of Kunti, there is no rebirth."

And once we attain Him, we have no longer to go through the chain of births and deaths, we are freed once for all from the Samsara.

This state of liberation from Samsara is called *Mukti*, and the liberated man is the *Mukta Purusha*. He realises the essence of his being – his Dharma, as none other than God, and therefore becomes "Divine" in all his bearings. Eternal Peace reigns in his heart, he has no want, no misery, no fear. Love and compassion for all move him to help them too out of the Samsara.

The Hindu Shastras hold that liberation (Mukti) is the goal to be attained by every individual. Indeed every one is terribly earnest to reach this goal; only, he may not be conscious of this fact.

Whenever we exert to extend our power, knowledge and happiness, whenever we try to escape from death, we really want to bring out the Divinity within us, and we are doing this all the time We refuse to remain within the bounds of Nature. Nature gives us only interrupted glimpses of joy, knowledge, power and life. But in our Soul we have all these in an unbounded measure. For our Soul is essentially one with God; and our search for these glimpses ends only when we come to fully realise and manifest the Divinity of our Soul. Reaching the infinite ocean (*sagara*) of Existence (*Sat*), Knowledge (*Chit*) and Bliss (*Ananda*) we have no longer to hanker after the little drops of pleasure doled out by Nature.

Thus, consciously or unconsciously, every creature on Earth is led forward by the instinctive urge for realising the Eternal and Infinite One within it; that is to say, every one is hurrying to attain Mukti or Liberation from the Samsara.

To attain Mukti, however, is no easy job; the path is

long and hard. We have to realise God, for then alone, shall we be completely liberated. True, God is always within us and all about us. But so long as our minds are unclean, we have seen, we cannot realise Him. So we have to cleanse our minds, and that is about all we have to do till we reach the goal. This is our practical religion (Dharma), our *sadhana* (spiritual endeavour).

This cleansing of the mind is a long-drawn process, the time required for this cannot be measured by months or years. It may take numerous births before one can reach the goal. Says Sree Krishna: (Gita VI. 45)

"The Yogi, striving assiduously, purified of taint (sin), gradually gaining perfection through many births, then reaches the highest goal."

The Hindu Sh*a*stras assure us, however, of one thing, that the progress made in one life is not lost. The next birth begins with this as an asset. Moreover, these Shastras prescribe a graded course of mental purification.

Now, all minds are not in the same state of purification, because their present state is determined by their efforts in the previous births. This is the reason, we can understand, why we differ from one another so much in our capacity, taste and temperament. Some minds are crude, some are refined. In Hinduism each mind finds a starting point suited to its stage of purification.

Now, what does this purification of the mind (*Chit-shuddhi*) exactly mean? Our minds seem to be glued to the world and its pleasures; we have to focus them entirely on God, and nothing else. One's mind has to be drawn away from sense objects, and fixed on God. Then alone one is sure to realise God, and become free for ever.

But our senses are attracted by the charming things of this world, and of the higher ones. Our minds run after the senses and we forget everything about God and our aim in life. It is no easy task for us to draw our minds away

from the mad pursuits of attractive things. Says the Lord: (Gita II. 67).

"For, the mind which follows in the wake of the wandering senses, carries away his discrimination, as a wind (carries away from its course) a boat on the waters."

Yet it has to be done, no matter how long we may have to strive. Attachment to all sense-objects has to be given up This can be achieved by sincere and persevering efforts. Thus, (Gita VI. 35)

"Without doubt, O mighty-armed, the mind is restless and difficult to control; but through practice and renunciation, O son of Kunti, it may be governed."

(Renunciation is freedom from desire for any pleasures, seen or unseen, achieved by a constant perception of evil in them. Renunciation is perhaps the greatest sacrifice next only to death.)

As this attachment decreases our minds get closer and closer to God. They (the minds) are like so many iron filings covered up with rust which sticks them together as it were. As they are cleaned God attracts them like a mighty magnet.

Now, attachment to all sense-objects cannot be given up in a day. Even the idea of such a thing is shocking to many. Crude minds like little children. want to enjoy the world; they need not go in for all-out detachment. Hinduism prescribes for them a preliminary course. This is known as Pravritti-Marga (Path of Desire). It allows individuals to desire the good things of this world and the higher ones, and tells them how they may fulfil such desires. Those who follow this Path sincerely can minimise their misery and obtain a good deal of enjoyment here and hereafter. Moreover, they get their minds gradually purified to a

certain extent by this process. For, the Pravritti Marga is essentially an elementary course of mental discipline.

On the other hand, there are individuals who appear to be fed up with this world. They do not hanker even after the intense enjoyment of the sense-objects of the higher worlds. Their experience in this life and in the previous lives must have helped them to see through the hollowness of sense-enjoyment. These people are fit for taking up the final course, namely, the Nivritti Marga (Path of Renunciation). Renouncing all desires they have to concentrate their minds absolutely on God. Various methods for doing this are prescribed; one may take up any of the methods and advance straight to the goal.

Thus, Hinduism teaches us to ascend to perfection by two stages,-through the Path of Desire, followed in due time by the Path of Renunciation, and this covers the whole course. This course ends only when the last trace of attachment to wordly things drops off, and the Divinity in us becomes fully manifest. For, then alone we get out of Samsara and attain Mukti.

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CHAPTER XII

PRAVRITTI MARGA (Path of Desire)

The world is so charming, it is full of things that make for enjoyment. Pleasing sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touches attract us We want to seize them and enjoy them; our desire for such enjoyment goes on increasing.

Then, again, there are infinitely more charming things in the finer worlds. Imagine a youth, a noble youth in the prime of life, most swift, alert, perfect, whole and resolute, most vigorous and of good learning and that to him belongs the entire Earth laden with all its riches. Then, we have in him one measure of happiness of this world. But this happiness is nothing compared with what one may get in the finer worlds. You will have to multiply his happiness one million times perhaps, to measure the happiness of a soul in the Pitriloka. This again multiplied another one million times will give the measure of happiness in the *Devaloka*. The same process over again will show the magnitude of the happiness in the *Brahmaloka*, which is the real Bliss. (Tait. Up. II. 8)

Thus informed by the Shastras we become eager to enjoy the intensely pleasing things of the finer worlds as well. We desire, therefore, to get the best things of this world as also of the finer worlds.

The Hindu Shastras show the way of fulfilling such desires. Each and every one of them is not good; some lead us to evil deeds, which later surely bring misery as their *phalam*, and we have to drop such desires if we want to be happy. Thus, lying, stealing, cheating, inflicting injury upon others (*himsa*) of both body and mind, are all evil deeds. They react upon us by bringing in misery;

and so we must avoid them; that is to say, any desire that prompts us to perform such evil deeds has to be given up. Our Shastras also prohibit all such acts that bring us misery Those who want happiness here and hereafter should never, therefore, go against the prohibitions (*nishedha*) of the Shastras. Then, again, Our Shastras enjoin us to do certain meritorious deeds. For, these are sure to bring happiness. So long as we are on the Path of Desire we should spare no pains to carry out these injunctions (*vidhi*) of the Shastras.

Now, what is the nature of a meritorious deed? In a word, any act that helps us to become *unselfish* is a meritorious act. Such acts alone can bring one happiness. One has to pay for one's future happiness out of one's present selfish interests. Each of these acts is a sacrifice - what we call a yajna.

The word yajna is rather mistranslated as sacrifice. But really it means sacred action. The heart and essence of yajna is *shraddha*; and *shraddha* is that attitude of the mind and soul which is born of the commingling of faith, consecration, abstinence, austerities, adoration and holiness. And it regards the thing to be done as the highest end and aim open to man.

Five "*yajnas*" are prescribed, we have seen, by the Shastras Briefly summarised they are:-

Deva-yajna, *Pitri-yajna*, *Rishi-yajna*, *Nri-yajna and Bhuta-yajna*. We have to please the dwellers of the *Deva-loka* and *Pitri-loka*, the Seers and Makers of the Shastras, mankind in general and all other creatures on earth by our acts of sacrifice. We have to give all others something out of what we possess. This is the price of our happiness!

Prayer and worship please the Devas. These are also creatures like ourselves, only they are much better placed and more highly evolved. Once they were men, and as a reward for their good deeds on Earth they have been born

as Gods in the Devaloka. "The Angels in the Heavens of Gladness reap Fruits of a "Holy Past". They have considerably more power than ourselves; they can control the elemental forces of Nature like light, heat, electricity, rain, wind etc. When pleased by our offerings, the Devas make these elemental forces favourable to us and bless us with what we desire most.

Among the dwellers of the Pitriloka there may be so many of our forefathers. They love us. If we remember them and offer them oblations (*tarpana*), they become pleased (*tripta*). They also wield much more power than we do. That is why when pleased with our oblations they can bless us with the things we desire for.

The Rishis (Seers) do not want any material offering from us. They will be pleased if we should regularly study the Shastras written by them, and follow our *nitya-karmas*, i. e., obligatory rites like sandhyavandan; for these we have to set apart a portion of our time. That is why this study (*swadhyaya*) is also an act of sacrifice. When pleased with our good actions, the Rishis see to our well-being. Nri-yajna is the fourth in order. We have to serve our ailing brothers, we should try to remove the distress of our fellow-beings One who does this really serves God. For, God is here in so many forms. Pleased by such service God grants our wishes (*ishtah*).

The same thing may be said of Bhuta-yajna, which comes next. We should spare a portion of our food for the beasts, birds, insects, etc. This act of sacrifice also earns for us happiness.

Deva-yajna and Pitri-yajna consist of sacrificial rites, and Nri-yajna and Bhuta-yajna acts of charity. These four together are known as *ishtapurtha*.

Besides the five yajnas above referred to each person has a certain set of duties to perform according to his stage of life (Ashrama) and station in the society (Varna).

Hindu life is divided, we have seen, into four stages, (*A*shramas): *Brahmacharya*, celibate life or student-life, *Garhastya* or house-holder's life, *Vanaprastha* or retired life, (literally, life in the forest) and *Sannyasa* or life of renunciation–these are the four stages coming one after another. For each of these *A*shramas certain specific duties are enjoined.

Then there are, we have also seen, four social groups (*Varnas*), each having a separate code of Dharma. They are the Brahmins (Spiritual teachers and Law-makers), the Kshatriyas (warrior class), the Vaishyas (traders) and the Sudras (labour-class). Those who are to study and explain the Shastras are the Brahmins. They are enjoined to lead strictly pure and simple lives. The Kshatriyas are the Kings and warriors; they are not to abuse their powers, their arms are meant for the protection of the weak and punishment of the wicked.

"Looking at thine own Dharma, also, thou oughtest not to waver, for there is nothing higher for a Kshatriya than a righteous war." (Gita II, 31). In other words it is the duty of the Kshatriya to fight in the interest of his country, people and religion.

The Vaishyas or merchant-class are not to stoop to greed or dishonesty. They are to spend according to their might for charities.

The Sudras or labourers are taught to be upright, active and faithful.

Now, for getting the pleasing things of this world and of the next, one has to carry out all the duties related to one's Varna and *A*shrama The duties of each according to his social standing and stage of life comprise his swadharma (own dharma).

Over and above the five yajnas and the Varnashrama duties, we have to worship God and pray to Him for the things we desire. God is really the Dispenser of the fruits

of our actions. He fulfils our desires if we pray to Him earnestly after having done all our duties faithfully. We have to exert ourselves as much as we can for gaining the desired ends. For, it is then, and then only that our sincere prayers to God are answered.

Thus, besides the moral discipline through the practice of truth, non-stealing, non-injury etc., the five yajnas, observance of swadharma according to Varna and *A*shrama, and worship of God are enjoined on all who want to tread the Path of Desire.

The Yajnas teach us sacrifice and service; they teach us to love and serve our fellow-beings and all beings above and below us. God is all Love and He is in all beings. So, by performing these yajnas we gradually come out of the dark cave of selfishness and get nearer to God, the Source of All Love and Light.

The Yajnas, therefore, not only bring us happiness but also "lead us from Darkness unto Light" by purifying our minds.

The Varn*a*shrama duties also go to remove many of our impurities, and help us gradually to shake off our lethargy (tamo-guna) and to control our passions (rajo-guna).

Lastly nothing purifies our minds more than the thought of God. Every time we think of Him our minds become purer.

Thus, a person who wants to tread the Path of Desire should strive to be clean in his thoughts and actions; righteous conduct should be his motto; he must practise truth in thought, word and deed. He should preserve cleanliness of the body and mind; he must not injure others (*ahimsa*). He must not have anything to do with fraud or deceit. And he should not be too much addicted to sense-objects. He should try his best to bring his senses under control. Together with this moral discipline he

should perform the Deva and the Pitri-yajnas in their current forms and the three other yajnas as of old, as well as the varnashrama duties as far as practicable under the conditions of modern life.

This in short, comprises what should be the Dharma of those modern Hindus, who want to take up the Path of Desire.

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CHAPTER XIII

NIVRITTI MARGA (Path of Renunciation)

As we have so far seen, what man really wants is Eternal Bliss (*Shreyas*). Only, he does not know where and how to get it. He mistakes sense-pleasures for pure bliss; this is the reason why he desires the attractive things of this world and of the next. Wealth progeny, fame and hundreds of other things of this world attract him. He runs after them. He seizes some and enjoys them for a while; some elude his grasp and he feels miserable; while some others remain in his clutches for a time and then suddenly disappear. Such looses haunt him.

Then again, as soon as he gains some coveted things fresh desires crop up and make him restless. He finds to his dismay that the senses cannot be appeased by enjoyment and that, on the other hand, their craving is increased by the process. So his life becomes a non-stop-race after these fleeting pleasures. On this path he never attains contentment. Misery born of unfulfilled desire and parting with coveted things dogs him at every step.

This goes on from birth to birth for, he has to face death again and again, though he may not like it.

Even the higher and finer worlds where he gets unalloyed pleasures do not give him eternal bliss. There a man of meritorious deeds may go after death and enjoy intense pleasures. But that is only for a time. After that he has to come down and be born again on this Earth, the Karma-bhumi. Thus,

"These deluded men fancy sacrifice and charitable works to be the highest, and know nothing better. Having reaped the fruits of their virtuous deeds in the highest heavens, the seats of sensual enjoyments, they fall into their old human life or into what is lower still." (Mundak Up. 1. 2, 10).

Really, so long as man is driven by desires, neither this world nor the next can bring him eternal bliss. Desire is verily the chain that binds him to Samsara.

Yet, man is loathe to part with desire. The craving for sense-objects dominates him. "The camel likes to browse on prickly shrubs, though these make his mouth bleed." Just so, man gloats over sense-pleasures, though these bring him untold miseries through repeated cycles of births and deaths.

The number of such men is very great indeed. For them, the first step is to take the Pravritti Marga; they are not to give up all desires; only, they have to regulate them by faithfully following the injunctions (*vidhi*) and prohibitions (*nishedha*) of the Shastras. Those who do this, enjoy, as we have seen, the good things of this world and of the next. After enjoying the intense pleasures of the higher worlds, they, however, come back to this earth, as noted above, and tread the Path of Desire again, but with more devotion. Again their meritorious deeds lead them to the intense pleasures of the higher worlds after death. And this process goes on over and over again till their minds become very pure.

But at a certain stage perhaps as a kind of reaction,

they should naturally realise the hollowness or vanity of desires; by their repeated experience they grasp the truth, that desires are never quenched by enjoyment, "just as fire can never be quenched by butter." Unfulfilled desires make one unhappy. Moreover, the period of enjoyment of these pleasures even in the higher worlds is limited.

Hence, by their own observation they become convinced that the Path of Desire cannot lead them to eternal bliss; and it is this eternal bliss that they have been seeking all the time. Realising the futility of desires they go out in quest of the path that may lead them to eternal bliss, eternal life and infinite knowledge. (*Sat-Chit-Ananda*).

This quest is the very starting point of real religion. The Path of Desire is no more than a preliminary discipline. It serves its purpose by making our minds pure, we have seen, pure enough to realise the futility of running after sense-objects. This precisely is its scope, it takes us no farther than that on the road to perfection.

So long as we remain pinned to sense-objects for our enjoyment, the Divinity within remains concealed from our view. Our gaze has to be drawn away from the sense-objects and turned inward to realise Him; then, and only then, it is possible for us to attain perfection and attain eternal bliss, eternal life and infinite knowledge.

Our desire for sense-objects, can, therefore, be said to be the only hurdle on the road to perfection. It makes us "world-bound." We have to cross this hurdle. Real religion begins and ends with this crossing. The moment we are free from desire we become "Divine".

The Nivritti Marga (Path of Renunciation) on the other hand leads us to this goal. It teaches us how we my root out our desires and thereby unfold our spiritual nature. This *marga* is, therefore, pre-eminently the path of religion.

This is why those who extol the Path of Desire too much and consider it to be the supreme religion are denounced by Sree Krishna.

"O Partha, no set determination is formed in the minds of those that are deeply attached to pleasure and power, and whose discrimination is stolen away by the flowery words of the unwise, who are full of desires and look upon heaven as their highest goal, and who, taking pleasure in the panegyric (laudatory, extolling) words of the Vedas, declare that there is nothing else. Their flowery words are exuberant with various specific rites as the means to pleasure and power, and are the causes of (new) births as the result of their deeds (performed with desire)" (Gita II. 42, 43, 44).

In other words, persons attached to pleasure and power cannot have perfect steadiness of mind in divine meditation.

Indeed religion begins with the Path of Renunciation. Thus:

"The Self-existent (God) has rendered the senses (so) defective that they go outward, and hence man sees the external, and not the internal Self; (only perchance) some wise man desirous of immortality turns his eyes (the senses) in, and beholds the inner *Atman* (by drawing the senses away from the sense-objects)." (Kath. Up. IV. 1.)

The Upanishads abound with such passages as the following:

"Neither by rituals nor by progeny, nor by wealth, but by renunciation alone, some attained immortality."

"Do thou know it by *shraddha*, *bhakti*, *dhyana* and *yoga*, not by work, nor by progeny, nor by wealth but by renunciation (*tyaga*, *vairagya*) alone the great ones attained immortality." (Kaivalya Up.)

And Renunciation is the central teaching of the Gita also.

When Sree Ramakrishna was asked "what does the

Gita teach?" he replied, "if you utter the word "Gita," a few times you begin to say "tagi, tagi"-which means one who has renounced. In other words, the ideal of renunciation is the spirit of the teaching of the Gita. Renunciation is indeed the beginning, the middle and the end of Spiritual life.

Compare with the above the common saying "where there is Rama (God) there is no *Kama* (desire); where there is *Kama* there Rama (God) is not." Sree Ramakrishna puts it thus: -

"If you desire to attain God, you will have to renounce *Kama* and *Kanchana* (lust and possession)." And Swami Vivekananda makes this point clear when he says "darkness and light, enjoyment of the world and enjoyment of God will never go together." "You cannot serve God and Mammon." Give up everything for the sake of the Lord."

Even in other religions we notice the same emphasis on renunciation. Christ said to a rich young man, "Give up all that thou hast and follow Me." Once He said, "whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it."

This is the Nivritti Marga. The path is, no doubt, hard and long, yet it is the only path to be trod, if we want to go ahead towards perfection.

The Nivritti-Marga, however, comprehends a number of alternative routes to perfection. The same destination, for example, may be reached by train, car, boat or aircraft through different tracts on land, sea and air. It is for us to choose the conveyance and the route that will suit our convenience. Similarly there are various routes in it leading to the manifestation of the Divinity within us. It is for us to choose the route also that suits us best.

The different paths prescribed by Hinduism are suited to men of different nature. Some people like action,

some prefer contemplation, some are emotional by nature, while some others want to rely more on reason than on emotion. The Hindu religion shows a distinct path to each of the above groups.

These paths are called Yogas, *yoga* literally means "union". These paths lead us to "fellowship with God," that is, to a stage when we become aware of God. Hence yogas may be said to "unite us with God." Of course the union has been there all along, only, we were not conscious of this fact; and that is the reason why these paths are called *yogas*.

Broadly speaking, there are four such yogas to suit four fundamental types of men. For the men of action – statesmen and warriors – there is the Karma-yoga; for the intellectual men – scholars and scientists – there is the Jnana-yoga; for the emotional man, – poet and artist – the Bhakti-yoga; and for the empiricists, Raja-yoga. But Bhakti-yoga is for all.

Says Sree Krishna – (Gita. VII, 3.)

"One, perchance, in thousands of men, strives for perfection;and one perchance, among the blessed (perfected) ones striving thus, knows Me in reality."

Indeed few people want sincerely to rise above nature and be free. Only those who experince through repeated births, the hollowness of sense-pleasures go in for renunciation. To them only, the desire for sense-objects appears to be a bondage, which they want earnestly to break through.

For doing this they have to take up any of the four yogas, and go through the Spiritual discipline prescribed by that yoga. Their Gurus or spiritual guides show them the paths that best suits them, and advise them as to how they may get over the difficulties in the way. Hinduism is very clear, we have seen, about the need of a Guru for the guidance of the spiritual aspirant (*sadhaka*).

A. Raja-Yoga – Path of Concentration or Meditation

There are some people who cannot take anything on trust, and refuse to be convinced of anything except by tangible proofs or results. In a word, those with a scientific turn of mind come within this group. In these days of science the number of such people is luckily on the increase.

To such people, we saw, Raja-yoga is admirably suited. It does not require one to swallow any dogma, nor to perform any mystifying ritual. It prescribes simply a graded course of mental concentration; and the courses are perfectly rational. The goal of Mukti is reached when the mind becomes absolutely still.

It is described as Ashtanga-yoga, because it prescribes eight successive courses through which the Sadhak has to pass. One need not start with faith in anything. One may even take up the courses one after another, with the idea of testing their efficacy. If a sincere attempt is made, even the preliminary courses may thrill a novice with novel experience within a short time. The eight courses are:

1. *Yama.* This consists of non-injury, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence (self-control) and non receiving of gifts.

2. *Niyama.* This stands for cleanliness, contentment, austerity, study and self-surrender to God.

Yama and Niyama are meant for moral purification; without these moral assets no spiritual progress is possible. So one must be well-grounded in Yama and Niyama before proceeding further.

3. *Asana.* This is only a sort of physical exercise. the object is to train the body to sit erect for a long time. Various postures (*Asanas*) are prescribed; in all of them, however, the spinal column has to be kept erect, the head,

neck and chest have to be held in a straight line. One may choose any of these postures and practise it till one can sit motionless for atleast an hour.

4. *Pranayama.* This is a breathing exercise. Rhythmic breathing helps concentration of the mind. Sitting still (*asana* together with rhythmic breathing (*pranayama*) makes the mind fit for "looking inward." In the practice of pranayama one should be guided by a Guru; otherwise it may vitally injure the body.

5. *Pratyahara.* This means "drawing in of the sense-organs." The mind is agitated mightily and ceaselessly by the sense-organs. The eyes, the ears, etc. on the physical body are only outer instruments; corresponding to them there are subtle counter-parts, which are ealled the *Indriyas* (sense-organs). Normally, these inner organs remain attached to their respective outer instruments; and as the latter come into contact with their objects (*vishayas*), the former break out into waves of distinct forms and stir up corresponding waves in the mind. When the physical eyes, for instance, contact a flower, the inner organ of sight produces the form of the flower in the mind; and it is this mental form that we see outside. Similar is the case with all our sensations of colour, sound, smell, taste and touch. Each sensation corresponds to a particular modification of the mind through an Indriya. Thus, so long as one remains awake, the outer instruments remain in contact with their objects and go on subjecting the inner organs of perception (*Jnanendriyas*) together with the mind to a non-stop series of modifications (*manovritti*).

Yet this is not all. The perceptions brought about in this way call up by suggestion, from within the depths of the mind, allied thoughts and impulses and stir up the inner organs of work (*Karmendriyas*). This is followed immediately by the formation of waves of Will in the mental stuff (*chit-akasha*). I see a flower; thoughts and

impulses rush up from within the mind and determine a will to seize the flower. All these are successive changes of the mental stuff. Hence, as long as the inner organs remain attached to the outer instruments the mind is bound to be in a state of continuous turmoil.

Pratyahara consists in detaching the inner organs (indriyas) from the outer instruments and thus keeping them unruffled. This is a great step forward towards pacifying or quieting the mind.

At first one is advised to control the bubbling up of sub-conscious thoughts; this is done by letting the mind run on and watching the thoughts that come up from within the depths of the mind. This mental exercise is a sort of emptying the mind. It gradually slows down the rush of thoughts from within the surface of the mind. As this goes on the mind becomes steadier, and along with that the nerves become more and more soothed and strengthened. One can then get a hold on the inner organs aud try to detach them from the outer instruments.

With the gradual steadiness of the mind achieved through Pratyahara all its faculties become keener. The powers of observation, reasoning, memory and will increase as the restlessness of the mind decreases. Really, a steady mind is a keen, firm and vigourous mind. Character must have such a mind for its basis. Pratyahara goes a long way to ensure such steadiness by freeing the mind from a good deal of external and internal disturbances. However, after practising Pratyahara for sometime one feels that the mind has become rather pliable and ready for concentration on one object or idea.

6. *Dharana*. When the mind has become pliable and ready for concentration on one object or idea, one should try to fix it on a single object. He may choose any object on which he is to meditate. Yet, he will find that inspite of his best efforts, the mind does not remain "glued"

to his chosen objective. The object appears to be hazy and there are breaks in the concentration. But he has to make repeated attempts. This process is called Dharana.

7. Dharana leads naturally to *Dhyana*. Repeated attempts at fixing the mind on one object help one to do that thoroughly for a short stretch of time. The mind then appears to flow in an unbroken current towards its target. This stage of the mind is what is known as Dhyana

8. Through intense practice Dhyana is followed by *Samadhi*. This is concentration *par excellence*. During Samadhi the mind loses its grip on all other things As in deep sleep, a man in Samadhi becomes uncouscious of everything about him. Even the object of meditation melts away. Yet Samadhi makes the mind keener than ever. It is in this state that the real import of the object comes like a flash and occupies the entire mind. Then and then alone one's knowledge about the object becomes complete.

This state of mind is called *Samprajnata* Samadhi. By meditating on any object in Nature till the mind is merged in such Samadhi, one can have a thorough knowledge of it. With such deep and direct knowledge comes mastery or complete control over the object. Through such concentration on the gross *Bhutas* (the Elements – Earth, water, fire, air and ether) the Hindu yogis gain the power of controlling external nature.

The first steps of Raja-yoga are only preparations for yoga or concentration; the last three, namely, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi constitute the course of concentration proper or *Samyama*. Samyama starts with Dharana and Samadhi one after the other.

Samyama is to be practised first on gross objects and then gradually on finer and finer ones. In the finer stage, the mind itself becomes the object of concentration.

Through this the Hindu yogis gain control over their own minds as well as over those of others, and come to know intimately everything in nature, external and internal.

Yet this is not the goal. Samprajnata Samadhi brings out the latent powers, reveals the secrets of all objects in external and internal nature, and enables the yogi to gain complete control over them. But it falls short of revealing the Divinity of his Self and liberating him from Samsara. A slip even from such a stage may whirl him through several births of miserable existence.

But he stands almost at the gate of the Supreme Realisation. If the yogi patiently persists in his practice of Samadhi on his own mind, at a certain stage a very wonderful event takes place; suddenly the mind becomes perfectly still. This is known as *Asamprajnata samadhi*. As soon as this happens, the last cover or veil seems to have been taken off and the Self stands revealed in Its Divine Glory. The Yogi then really comes to the very core of his being and realises It as nothing but God.

When his consciousness comes back to the normal plane, the yogi appears to be thoroughly transformed. There is nothing for him to desire, fear or grieve for. He has reached the goal. His heart is full of peace. With love and compassion for all he goes about guiding others on the path of liberation.

Caution: The path of Raja-yoga, however, is full of pitfalls. One should be aware of this from the very beginning, and undue haste is dangerous. The essential moral preparation through the practice of Yama and Niyama must be completed before taking up any of the subsequent courses. Otherwise the yogi's toil may just end in wrecking his body. All sorts of physical ailments, reaching up to nervous disorders and even to insanity, may be the result of such rash endeavour. Next, the practice of Pranayama also without a proper Guru has every chance

of proving equally risky. One may, with more benefit, skip over this step altogether and take up Pratyahara.

With Pratyahara the mind begins to know itself. The yogi enters a new region and starts getting a novel experience. As his concentration deepens through Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi, he discovers the immense potency of the mind. Much of the mental energy remains untapped and a good deal is wasted by the ordinary man.

Yoga enables one to release the latent powers and work wonders with them. These supernatural powers are known as *siddhis*, or occult powers. Hypnotism, telepathy, clair-voyance and clair-audience and many more miraculous feats may easily be performed by a yogi with the help of these occult powers.

The following are the Siddhis that could be accomplished: (1) *Anoormimatvam* (cessation from hunger and thirst) (2) *Doorashravanam* (clairaudience) (3) *Dooradarshanam* (clairvoyance) (4) *Manojavah* (the moving of the body with the speed of the mind) (5) *Kamarupani* (assumption of any form at will) (6) *Parakaya Praveshanam* (power of entering into the body of another) (7) *Swachhandamrityu* (dying at will) (8) Flirting with celestial damsels (9) *Sankalpasamsiddhi* (attainment of any object at will) and (10) An irresistible power of command. Other powers are: the knowledge of the minds of others, power of suspending the action of the Elements, invincibility, etc.

But these powers may also entrap a yogi. Like riches these wonderful powers may divert his mind from the path of God, and he may feel tempted to display them for winning wealth and adoration; if he does that he becomes lost over again in the maze of Samsara.

A real seeker of Eternal Bliss should never yield to such temptations; he must never seek such powers nor make a show of them when those come to be acquired through the practice of yoga.

There are some people, however, who take up Rajayoga only for the attainment of worldly things and miraculous powers. They want to improve their health and personality; and to impose on others by showing miracles. Evidently these people are selfish and world-bound; and occult powers in their possession are apt to prove dangerous to society. They may thereby do a lot of mischief to their fellow-men. Thus *Raja*-yoga, which can help us to manifest our Divinity. is liable to be abused by these power-seekers. One should be aware of those who interpret yoga in terms of temporal powers. Spirituality has nothing to do with these powers. Any desire for these, like all other desires for worldly things, is suicidal to spiritual life and should be shunned like poison.

Brahmacharya and Modern Science

The attention of the ancient thinkers was directed from the commencement to the Mystery of Reproduction. Observing the operations of its laws in plant and animal life, and noting that the Essence of Life seemed to be concentrated into the tiny seed of the plant or the animal, they soon came to realize that Nature here manifested a marvellous power of concentration of the Life Forces into a minimum of space. Consequently they regarded such concentrated vital force with a religious awe, and considered it to be supernatural. Further observations concerning the effect of sexual mutilation on animals and men, and of the changes brought about in body and mind by the quickening of the reproductive power during puberty and adolescence, and by the decrease or waning of such power as a result of old age, led these observers to the conclusion, that in the generative forces were to be found a highly concentrated essence of life which, if properly controlled and directed, was capable of renewing and continuing the vital strength and vigour of the individual almost indefinitely.

In the very ancient Yoga Philosophy of the Hindus, we have seen, are found many references to this control and application of this Regenerative Power; that is, of the Generative Power employed for the purpose of increasing and maintaining the mental and physical energy, strength and vigour of the individual, in addition to its more familiar and common offices and activities, as of procreation. The Regenerative Power was known as the "*Ojas*" or "*Tejas*," and was conceived as of a fiery, ardent, highly concentrated and highly active nature. It was taught that by proper direction of *Ojas* along certain physical and psychical channels, not only can the Yogi greatly increase his physical strength, energy and vigour, but that he can also thereby cultivate great mental powers and psychic qualities; and the yogis claim that of all the energies that the human body comprises, the highest is the Ojas.

" The yogis say that part of the human energy which is expressed as sex-energy, in sexual functions, sexual thought, and so on, when checked and controlled easily becomes changed into Ojas; and as this lowest centre is the one which guides all these functions, the yogi pays particular attention to that centre. He tries to take up all this sexual energy and convert it into Ojas. It is only the chaste man or woman who can make the Ojas rise and become stored in the Brain, and that is why chastity has always been considered the highest virtue, because man feels that if he is unchaste spirituality goes alway; he loses mental vigour, and strong moral stamina. That is why in all of the religious orders in the world, that have produced spiritual giants one will always find this intense chastity insisted upon. That is why the monks came into existence, giving up marriage. There must be perfect chastity in thought, word and deed. Without it the practice of Rajayoga is dangerous and may lead to insanity. If people practise Raja yoga and at the

same time lead an impure life, how can they expect to become yogis?" (Swami Vivekananda – Rajayoga).

The above is not merely the personal teaching of the Swami, it is his statement of the teachings of the Hindu Yoga Philosophy established thousands of years ago. Its essential idea is found to permeate many of the later philosophies and religions, though in many cases it has become corrupted by the loss of its original spirit, and has developed into fanatical asceticism and a degradation of the idea of sex and reproduction. The original idea of the teaching was that sex is not impure, but that in their proper place and use its activities are proper and normal; and that in its perverted excesses and misuse it becomes an evil. Regeneration is upheld, not because Generation is wrong, but because Regeneration is an additional field for the expression and manifestation of the concentrated vital force present in the human system.

The ancient Egyptians also taught a similar doctrine. The Creative Principle or Life-Energy, was conceived as feminine. The neophyte was taught that by a conservation of this Life-Energy, and by a refusal to expend it in Generation, it might be transmuted into vital force, which by the process of Regeneration would vitalise, animate and vivify the body and mind of the person, and give him psychical and spiritual powers; which are surely super-human and possibly supernatural as well.

The ancient Jews also held to the truth of a similar belief and practice; and some of the ancient Hebrew writers taught that the story of Adam and Eve is merely an allegorical representation of this principle. This theory held that Adam and Eve represented the male and the female human beings as they were originally; these beings were destined to live for ever, their Creative Energy being constantly turned inward in the process of Regeneration. They were tempted by the suggestions of an Evil Spirit,

and thereafter turned their Creative Energy into the channels of Generation and away from those of Regeneration, thereby perpetuating the race as a whole, but bringing Death to its individual members.

In the Middle Ages the Alchemists and occult philosophers devoted much attention to the subject of Regeneration, and frequently referred to it in their writings under the figurative expression, "Elixir of Life;" and legends say that some of them developed the power and ability to live far beyond the allotted life-time of man, and retained their full vigour, strength and vital energies to the last. The masses of people thought that the "Elixir of Life" was something of the nature of a cordial or tincture of wonderful properties; but those who knew the secret code realised that this potent Elixir was nothing but the highly concentrated Creative Energies of man, existing in potency and latency in his reproductive organism, the same being transmuted into an Inner Vitality instead of being dissipated in lustful practices or expended in the functions of Generation.

In this fundamental idea of Regeneration, then, is to be found the true explanation of the universal insistence upon chastity, continence and often upon celibacy-all comprising the Hindu ideals of Brahmacharya-of the priests and great spiritual leaders, as well as on the part of the great occultists and workers of "mysteries." This was because of the belief that the higher powers of man, physical, mental, psychical and spiritual were increased in power and efficiency by means of the practice of turning the Creative Energy *inward* rather than outward.

Modern Science has now discovered certain remarkable facts in the realm of physiology and biochemistry, which tend to prove the correctness of the old doctrine of Transmutation of Sexual Energy, now known as Vital Rejuvenation. And in the extraordinarily rapid advances

made by Science within the last few decades no section has attracted keener interest of Biochemists than that which deals with the so-called Endocrine organs (also known as "ductless glands" or organs of "internal secretions") and their chemical messengers, the Hormones or internal secretions, by means of which they stimulate or control the activities of cells in the various parts of the body; and the conception has already gained ground that many bodily and a few mental disorders are fundamentally due to excessive or insufficient activity of one or other of these organs, and could be corrected either by surgical methods on the one hand, or by the therapeutic use of appropriate extracts to make good existing deficiencies on the other. Hence one should not be surprised to find that so much of experimentation has been carried on in this line with varying results. Nevertheless, a character, the body-structure or mental acuity may be changed by the administration of hormonal extracts, and it is possible we may soon be able to shape the future race into an even-tempered, happy, energetic and of pleasing appearance, and free from modern diseases, (rather diseases of civilisation) like high blood-plessure, diabetes, cancer, obesity, etc. In addition to the true ductless glands (like the thyroid, the thymus, the adrenals, the pituitary and the pineal glands, which are devoid of any external secretion) the pancreas, the liver, the testes and the ovaries (which have also the external secretion of their own, as the pancreatic juice, the bile, the semen and the ovarian secretion respectively) also do yield important hormones having the power to stimulate the activities of any organ or tissue.

Now the testes, we saw, are glands secreting both an external secretion (seminal fluid) and internal hormone (the gonad or the testicular hormone). Since the time of Brown Sequard senility in the male has been regarded as due to failing secretion of the testicular hormone. Many

reports of restored health and muscular as well as sexual vigour with possibly prolongation of life after implantation, or more rarely injection of testicular material are to be found in medical literature.

Thus, Brown-Sequard, 60 years ago administered to himself gonadal extracts at 70; but the effects were transitory and he died. Other famous rejuvenators are Steinach with his ligature of the vas (the glandular duct) as a means of stimulating the gonad to activity, and Voronoff with his operation for grafting the sex-glands of chimpanzees into human beings. Each procedure was followed by cases of improvement in general condition and revival of the sexual function, but the grafts withered, the other changes relapsed and rejuvenescence was temporary. Indeed, in the light of modern knowledge one could hardly expect that the renewal of these glands alone would give a longer span of life, since so many organs are involved in the inner balance "that is health".

3

B. Jn*a*na Yoga — Path of Knowledge

Divers get to the bottom of the sea and fish for pearls. Our Rishis of old were super-divers. Instead of going out to the sea they dived within themselves and found a wonderful treasure, much more valuable than all the riches of the world. After such a successfull plunge one of the Rishis came out and declared, "Listen, O ye children of the Immortal One, who reside in this or in a brighter world, I have known the Great One, knowing Whom one goes beyond Death and beyond Avidy*a* (Ignorance) or Sams*a*ra."

Diving within himself the Rishi did really reach the bottom of the universe and discover the great treasure "that can take us beyond Death."

In fact, the Rishi wanted to "know himself;" so,

withdrawing his mind from the sense-world he applied it to make a vigorous search for his real Self. This led him to a point where the mind was hushed into silence; and the Self stood revealed in all its Glory. The Rishi saw what he himself really was. He discovered that his Self (*A*tman) was no other than God – the Great Spirit (Brahman) within the universe. Thus realising his one-ness with God he reached the goal of liberation, and cried *eureka* (= I have found it) in the abundance of joy.

No wonder whatever, that man becomes God, becomes divine as soon as he knows himself. And why should he not? Because man is not something other than God. Essentially he is God always, only he has to discover this fact for himself. And this is all that he has to do for liberation or Mukti.

The Spiritual practice – S*a*dhana – that leads one straight to this discovery, is what is known as *Jnana-yoga*; *Jnana* means knowledge and Jnana-yoga stands for concentration on Self-knowledge. Such concentration helps one to penetrate the depths of Ignorance (*Avidy*a) and realise that the real Self (*A*tman) is none other than the Great One, Param*a*tman.

This yoga is based on the *Jnanakanda* of the Vedas. The Upanishads dwell mainly on this theme. They enjoin "Know thyself." And why? Because, they declare, "The real Self of man is verily the same as the Great One."

"He in whom the heaven, the earth and the interspace are centred or woven, together with the mind and all *pranas* (life-breaths) – know Him alone as the one Self of all, and desist from all other talk. This is man's bridge to the shore of Immortality (across the ocean of Sams*a*ra)". Obtain ye the knowledge of that *A*tman only.

(Mundak Up. II. 2·5)

"This Self, the perceiver of everything, is Brahman. This is the teaching". (Br. Ar. Up. 2. 5. 19) So by knowing

oneself one realises the Great One and becomes one with Him; he becomes a liberated Soul, a "Mukta-Pursha".

"Whoever knows the Supreme Brahman, becomes Brahman Itself. In his family none is born ignorant of Brahman. The knots of his heart being unloosed he goes beyond sorrow and sin, and attains immortality."

(Mundak Up. III. 2. 9.)

("Knots of the heart" stand for ignorance, desire, passion, etc. which frustrate the dawn of Knowledge.)

These are no empty words or mere dogmas, but are spiritual truths discovered by the great Rishis of the Upanishads in a transcendental state of consciousness. They have since been verified by thousands of Blessed Saints and Seers of this Holy land.

Jnana-yoga stands on such Spiritual truths and throws open a direct approach to Self-knowledge (*Atma-jnana*) and hence to liberation or Mukti.

It does not prescribe any code of rituals, nor does it require one, like Raja-yoga, to go through any quasi-mechanical exercise of the body and mind. Cogitation on the essence of one's being as revealed by the Shastras, followed by meditation on the same, are about all that comprise the Jnana-yoga course. This is precisely why this yoga appeals to those intellectuals who are rationalistic by nature.

No digression has to be made by the Jnana-yogi. He cuts across the domain of Avidya with the sword of Viveka or discrimination, and reaches the goal by the shortest route.

But it is not easy to make such a short cut. A good deal of mental preparation is necessary before one may take to Jnanayoga. One must have a very sound and pure mind before going in for this course. The Divinity of the Self can be realised only with the help of a very fine and pointed intellect; and the intellect attains such a stage only when the mind is thoroughly purified.

"This Atman, hidden in all beings, reveals Itself not to all, but is seen only by the Seers of the subtle through their pointed (sharp or keen) and subtle intellect, i. e., only by means of concentration." (Kath. Up. III. 12)

The Sadhak must discriminate between the Real-(God) and the Unreal-(the universe). He must not hanker after anything of this world or of the next ones. His senses and mind must remain entirely under his control, and he must remain contented under all circumstances. He has to put up with all afflictions that may come in his way, and that without any grudge or regret. He must have intense faith in himself and in the spiritual truths discovered by the Rishis. He must have concentration of the mind, and above all, he must have burning desire for attaining Mukti, and one-pointed devotion to gaining this end. In short, "it is the self-controlled man, moving among objects with senses under restraint, and free from attraction and aversion, that attains to tranquility." (Gita. II. 64)

Without, therefore, a proper equipment meditation on the Self is not possible. By pondering over the real nature of the Self one may at best succeed in getting a hazy intellectual conception about it. Any further progress is simply barred; and compared with the realisation of the Self, this conception is nothing; and that is about all that an unclean mind may get on this path. Spiritual illumination is far way off, attainable only by the Pure ones.

To persons with necessary qualifications Jnanayoga presents only three steps: 1. *Shravana* (hearing) 2. *Manana* (cogitating) and 3. *Nidhidhyasana* (meditating).

1. *Shravana* consists in hearing about the real Self. One has to do this from an illumined guide, Acharya. A liberated sage alone can speak effectively on the subject, he can clear the pupil's doubts, provided the pupil also is duly qualified. Such a sage has to be approached by the

pupil with humility, pertinent queries and service, so that he may disclose the secrets of Self-Knowledge. When, however such a sage is not available one has to be guided atleast by a well-advanced Soul. Under such guidance one should study the relevant Scriptures dealing with Self-knowledge.

"To know That, let him become a pupil (with fuel in hand) under a Preceptor who is both learned in the Scriptures and established in The Brahman (the Spirit)."

(Mundak Up. I. 2. 12.)

"To such a seeker, whose mind is tranquil and senses are controlled, and who approaches him in proper form, let the wise teacher impart the science by which one knows the True, Imperishable Being." (Ibid I. 2. 13)

(Tranquility of mind and control of the senses are the qualifications of a true seeker after God; without these the study or hearing of the truths of Vedanta (*shravana*) will have no effect on one's mind.)

2. *Manana* or cogitation. One has to reason out what has been heard from the Guru or spiritual guide and the Shastras. A good deal of hard and almost constant thinking is necessary, since one has to dwell on very subtle abstractions. And this has to be done with one-pointed attention. This, in short, is what *Manana* stands for.

Through *Manana* along these lines the aspirant (sadhak) is able, in course of time, to grasp the fact that, detached from the gross and fine bodies he stands aloof as the Witness, the Supreme Self.

3. *Nididhyasana* requires the Jnana-yogi at this stage to withdraw himself entirely from all things and concentrate on the idea – "I am the Witness." When such concentration matures, suddenly everything vanishes from the scene and he finds himself one with the Eternal Spirit. This state is called *nirvikalpa samadhi.*

* * * *

Thus with the help of these three steps the Jnana-yogi "peels the universe layer by layer as it were, and reaches its very core" and comes to be blessed with the Supreme Realisation.

The Self and the Ego.

"I" "Me" "My" and "Mine" are the most commonly used terms. I am the subject, and the entire world outside is the object of my experience. The world is thus divided into myself as the subject of experience, and everything else grouped together as the object of my experience. Of these two groups the subject is surely the more important one. As a matter of fact, I am the very centre of my view of the world.

Inspite of such paramount importance of one's Self, we appear to have a very muddled idea about ourselves. Our very talks betray this fact. Indeed it is most surprising to note that we scarcely know what part of our being we precisely refer to by the word "I." Yet this word stands for something with which one is most vitally concerned; and all other things come after that.

When I say, "this is a horse," I surely mean that the horse is something distinct from me, and that it is only an object of my experience. When I say "this is my horse," I mean that the horse which is a distinct object of my experience, belongs to me. I never confuse the horse with myself. Because when the horse kicks, I never say that I am kicking. So far we are perfectly consistent with our thoughts. The same thing holds good whenever we talk of any other object of our experience like the horse.

But when I say "my body" there is some confusion in my thought. Obviously I mean that the body belongs to me; therefore the body must surely be something distinct from me. It is an object of my experience as much as any other thing.

But our ideas are not at all clear on this point. For, when I say, "I am wounded" we betray such confusion. The wound is evidently on the body, which is distinct from myself. But we forget this fact and take the body as myself or as a part of my being when we say "I am wounded."

Thus we say "I am weak, sick, old" etc. when really the body passes through such states. Even our idea that I am a man or a woman is derived from such confused thinking.

So with the mind. We use the expression "my mind." By that surely we mean that the mind is distinct from myself. And do we not witness the functions of our mind just as we observe all external events? Indeed the mind is an object of our experience like all other things. But we have no clear grasp of this idea. Else how can we say, "I think, I desire, I will," when really the mind is doing all these things? We use both the expressions, "my mind is worried," and "I am worried" to convey the same idea. This clearly shows how we are confused about the relation of our mind to ourselves.

The body and mind are distinct objects of my experience, yet we look upon them as parts of our being. The truth, however, leaks out when we say, "my body," "my mind" etc. Truth and untruth are some how mixed up in our thought.

This, the Hindu Sh*a*stras hold, is due to Primal Ignorance, Avidy*a*. This Avidy*a* covers up our real nature and shows us as something that we are *not*. The self-same Soul is present in every creature from the smallest amoeba up to the Mukta-purusha. The difference between them is only in the degree of Its manifestation. As Avidya clears up bit by bit, the Soul becomes more and more manifest.

On the human plane our ignorance about our real Self is deep enough to make us even think that we are nothing

but the body. This is our crudest idea about ourselves. By a little and imperfect discrimination we gradually come to believe that we are the body, the senses and the mind lumped together. When we advance one step farther, we find that the body is only an outer casing, in which we live in a finer state of existence, as a composition of the senses, the Mind, Intellect (Buddhi) and Vital Energy (Prana). Proceeding further, we see that even these are the objects of our experience. We can witness their functioning. At this stage we find that we live in Buddhi (Intellect). Normally that appears to be the seat of all creatures (*Jivas*).

Taking his stand on Buddhi, the *Jiva* claims to be the doer of all deeds (*kartha*) and the subject of all experience (*bhokta*). This is described through a beautiful imagery as follows:—

Atmanam rathinam viddhi shareeram rathameva tu, Buddhim tu sarathim viddhi manah pragrahamevacha. Indriyani hayanahuh vishayamsteshu gocharan, Atmendriya mano yuktam bhokta ityahuh maneeshinah.

"Know that the Soul is the master of the chariot who sits within, and the body is the chariot. Consider the intellect as the charioteer and the mind as the rein. The senses, they say, are the horses, and their roads are the sense-objects. The wise call Him the enjoyer (*Bhokta*) (when He is) united with the body, the senses and the mind." (Kath Up. III. 3 & 4)

Really we reside as *Jivas* in the intellect (*buddhi*), which is a part of the *sukshma-sharira*, consisting of the intellect, mind, sense-objects and vital enery. As *Jivas* we make contact with the gross outer world through the *sthula sharira*. Again, leaving the material body alone in light sleep, we become the subject of action and experience in the dream-state as well. With the entire subtle body (*sukshma-sharira*) we pass out of the Material body at death

and enter another at re-birth. Thus as *Jivas* we continue living through myriads of births and deaths.

When, however, we feel past asleep (*sushupti*) we lose all our bearings and simply vanish from the stage as it were, and we do not perceive anything, nor can we perform any act. We cease to exist as actors and perceivers. We no longer seem to be Jivas; we are reduced to the causal state (*karanavastha*). We live with all our thoughts and experiences (*samskaras*) potentially present in this state. And as soon as we are released from *sushupti*, we appear to spring up into existence as the subject of action and perception either on the dream-stage or on the waking one.

Indeed, this phenomenon of *sushupti* is unusual. It causes a break almost every day in our continued existence as the subject of action and experience. Yet in deep sleep we cannot say that we cease to exist. It is not a total blank or void. We feel that there is a continuity of our existence even through sound sleep. When we wake up, we can say that we had a sound sleep and did not experience anything. On whose evidence do we say that? The active part of our being was not on the stage. Yet there remained something in us that *witnessed* the sleep-state. This simple witnessing without any action or experience is, therefore, done by something in us, that never goes to sleep. It exists always. And this is precisely our real Self (*Sakshi-chaitanya*). The Self is neither the doer nor the experiencer. It is the constant witness of all actions and experiences of the *Jiva*, as the latter passes through the three states (*avasthas*) of waking (*jagrata*), dream (*swapna*), and deep sleep (*sushupti*), and goes on and on from birth to birth.

"The wise man grieves not, having realised that great, all-pervading *A*tman through which one perceives all objects in dream as well as in the waking state".

(Kath. Up. IV. 4)

(Atman is that pure Intelligence which makes us conscious of our sleep, or dream, or the awakened state).

We are really this witnessing Self. The *Jiva*, the actor and perceiver (*karta* and *bhokta*) in us, is also an object of experience. Beyond the *buddhi* and distinct from it, we exist eternally as pure Spirit. This is our Soul.

"The senses are said to be superior (to the body); the mind is superior to the senses, the intellect is superior to the mind, and that which is superior to the intellect is He (the *A*tman)". (Gita III. 42)

Also, "The Self is very much superior to *buddhi*".

(Kath. Up. III. 10.)

And the Hindu Sh*a*stras declare that the Soul of us all is one All-pervading Existence. It is an infinite ocean (s*a*gar) of Existence (*Sat* or Truth, *Chit* or Knowledge and A*nanda* or Bliss.) This is verily the Brahman, the Infinite One, from whom all the worlds, gross and fine, are projected, in whom they exist and into whom they disappear during *Pralaya* (Dissolution).

Yes, our Soul is one and undivided. Our separate Buddhis, illumined by the Consciousness of the Self-same Soul appear as distinct conscious entities. Like so many moons they shine with the light of the same sun, namely, the Brahman. And this moon of *Jiva* in us lights up all that we see about us in the gross or finer worlds. Thus,

Tameva bhantam anubhati sarvam, tasya bhasa sarvamidam vibhati.

When He shines, everything else shines,
By His light all this is lighted." (Kath. Up. V. 15)

4

C. Bhakti-Yoga (Path of Love and Devotion)

Bhakti-Yoga rests on the simple truth that one can realise God by loving Him; nothing else is required, neither abstract thinking nor any mechanical exercise of the body

or mind; nor does it make any unnatural demand on the Sadhaka.

It is said of the great Tulsidas, the famous saint and author of the Hindi Ramayana-Ramacharitamanas, that he was in his youth too much attached to the wife, so much so, that on one occasion when she went away to her father's house for a short visit, he followed her immediately, as he found it impossible to stay at home for even a day without her. At this the wife remarked, "how passionately attached you are to me! If you should simply shift this attachment to God you will realise Him in no time!"

This remark worked like magic on Tulsi's mind, he turned round and became a passionate lover of God; and in the fulness of time he realised Him and helped others also towards such realisation.

Numerous are the instances of such transformation in the Hindu religious lore, they give a clue to Bhakti-yoga or the Path of Love and Devotion. Now, most of us are emotional by nature, and we are swayed more by love than any other emotion. We love ourselves, we love our kith and kin, we love our hearth and home. We love our community, our nation, our country and our race. We love wealth, power and possession, we are ridden by sex-love. Our love for all these determines most of our activities and shapes our conduct. Moreover, it gives us joy and makes life interesting. It throws a sort of charm on the whole world; without it life becomes intolerable.

No doubt love is a basic and universal emotion, and as much, a very potent factor of our life. Every other emotion appears to be stirred up by this basic love. Our fear of death, for instance, arises from our love for life. Hatred springs from excessive love for self-interest. Indeed the noblest as well as the vilest deeds owe their origin to this ruling passion. Self-less love for others is the prime mover of all pious souls. The inspiration for our bravest acts

often comes from this source. The mother faces the lion to rescue her beloved child, the soldier dares death for the love of his country. On the other hand, it is love for one's own interests more than anything else that moves the assassin, the tyrant and the exploiter to their dirty jobs. The gangster is goaded to acts of dare-devilry by his love for the near and dear ones

Thus the crowning social virtues as also the darkest anti-social crimes may be prompted equally by love. "Love is like the lamp that may be made to illumine an altar as well as to set a house on fire." It all depends on the way we use this mighty emotion. And Bhakti-yoga suggests the best possible use that may be made of this emotion-love. We may utilise it to reach the goal of life or Mukti.

All that we have to do is to love God intensely, just as we love any other thing on earth. We all know how to love a person or a thing dearly. We are required only to shift this focus from worldly objects to God. Through this process our emotional nature gets its full play. So we never have to feel out of our elements. Moreover as love for God develops, attachment to other things gradually melts away. So Renunciation becomes easy and natural. Besides, love of God is accompanied by pure joy from the very beginning. This is why Bhakti-yoga, that is, the Path of Love, appeals to the majority of mankind. It is, perhaps, the easiest approach and suited to the taste and capacity of most of us.

Yet love for God is not so easy as it seems to be. So long as there is any trace of desire in one's mind for worldly things, one cannot have a very intense yearning for God. To love an object that pleases our senses is one thing, but to love God, whom we neither see nor feel at the beginning, is surely something quite different.

Bhakti-yoga helps us out of this difficulty. It presents

a graded course through which a novice may gradually develop intense love for God that leads him straight to liberation.

A little reflection will make it clear that Christianity and Islam both teach Bhakti-yoga as the only approach to God.

This Supreme one-pointed love for God is called *para-bhakti*. Such love, attended by ecstatic bliss and visions of God, is coveted by many aspirants as the very goal of their spiritual practice (*sadhana*). Such devotees (*bhaktas*) after realising God in this life become perfect. After death they retain their subtle body (*sukshma-sharira*) and proceed to higher worlds, where they live eternally in the presence of their beloved Lord.

Now, such love for God is not attained in a day. It has to be cultured. One has to pass through a preparatory course of training, and this is called *gauni-bhakti* (or secondary bhakti). Through devoted practice (*sadhana*) for a long time *gauni-bhakti* gradually matures into *para-bhakti* or Supreme *bhakti*.

Just like any other yoga, Bhakti-yoga also prescribes a course of moral preparation. One must try to control the passions, practise self-restraint and self-denial, truth, honesty, sincerity, non-injury. One must not covet what belongs to others, and should do good to all without a thought of return. One must be strong in body and mind, and not give way to excessive mirth.

With such moral make-up one should stick to spiritual practice with grit and determination. For, by this practice alone he has to draw his mind away from other things and fix it on God. one who proceeds with unflinching devotion succeeds in the attempt.

The spiritual practice prescribed by Bhakti-yoga, consists of constant thinking of God. Such thought alone purifies the mind, gives it strength and joy and takes it

farther and farther, towards supreme love for God, and liberation (Mukti). Says Sree Krishna: (Gita XII. 6 & 7)

"Those who worship Me, resigning all actions in Me, regarding Me as the Supreme Goal, meditating on Me with single-minded yoga – to these whose mind is set on Me, verily, I become ere long, O Arjuna, the Saviour out of the ocean of mortal Samsara (the round of birth and death)."

No doubt it is quite difficult for the mind to think of God always. Yet every new and determined effort makes the task easier, provided the aspirant is not attached to worldly things. Says Sree Bhagavan:

"Without doubt, O mighty-armed, the mind is restless, and difficult to control; but through practice and renunciation, O son of Kunti, it may be governed." (Gita VI. 35)

At first the mind may refuse to move in the same groove. It may be boring to repeat the same thought in the same way over and over again. Bhakti-yoga solves this initial difficulty by showing a variety of ways through which we may think of God. We may simply repeat His names, we may chant hymns and prayers, we may make *bhajan*, we may worship Him with offerings, we may meditate on Him or His power and His glory, we may read the Scriptures about Him as also about those blessed ones who received His grace. Thus we may engage our mind variously in the thought of God. This does away with monotony and makes the practice interesting.

Then, the Hindu idea, that God has projected the universe out of Himself – *yato va imani bhutani jayante* – makes it rather easy for us to think of Him. We are used to think of anything through its forms. A formless void cannot be conceived by us. Now, we may look upon the whole universe as God Himself. It will be easier still if we choose any object within creation and look upon it as God. That also is a form through which God has expressed Himself.

Besides the things that we see about us, however, there are various other Divine forms assumed by Him, as, for instance, Narayana, Shiva, Ganapati, Surya, Durga and Kali. As a matter of fact, all the Deities (Devatas) being His manifestations, any of them may be looked upon as the Lord Himself and worshipped with equal benefit. The higher the manifestation, the easier it is for us to look upon it as the Lord,

Moreover, the Hindus believe that God incarnates Himself even as man for helping the spiritual evolution of mankind. Says Sree Krishna:

"Whenever, O Bharata, there is decline of Dharma, and rise of Adharma, then I body Myself forth. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of Dharma, I come into being in every age." (For the destruction of the wicked=in order to destroy their wickedness and give them life-eternal) (Gita IV. 7 & 8)

Rama and Krishna are two of the prominent Incarnations (*Avataras*) of God in this land. One may think of any of these Avataras as God and practise devotion to Him.

The Vaishnavas, who are the leading sponsors of Bhakti-yoga, take either Sree Ramachandra or Sree Krishna as their chosen Ideal (*Istadevata*). To love God through a human form is surely the easiest for us. We may stand in awe and reverence before the Formless Almighty God or God with an Effulgent Divine Form. But that is not love. Love is based on a sense of kinship When God appears as man, He really comes very close to us and we may easily approach Him. We need not strain our imagination too much to love God through such a human form.

However, *gauni-bhakti* consists in a sincere effort for fixing the mind on God through any of the forms in

creation from a blade of grass to the great Creator Brahma. Each and every one of these being His manifestation, is nothing but God. Thus one may worship the Sun, the Moon or the sky as God Himself. He may even think of God as immanent in the sea or in any of the rivers or mountains or trees. Even a block of stone or piece of metal may be regarded by him as a symbol of God and worshipped with devotion. Thus through the Sh*a*lagr*a*ma-shila or the Shivalinga or other such symbols the Hindus worship the self-same God.

Ordinarily our mind cannot embrace the Infinite, but it can dwell on the finite and the concrete. This is why it becomes easy for us to think of God through any of His finite and concrete manifestations. Now, the sun, the sky and the sh*a*lagr*a*ma-shila are little bits of manifestation of the Infinite, the Eternal Brahman. They help us to focus our mind on God. These are called *pratik*as (symbols). They represent God. Worship of God through any of these forms is called pratik*a* up*a*sana.

The divine forms of Gods are usually represented by images (*pratim*a) or pictures (*pata*) and through them the devotee (*bhakta*) worships God and none else. Certainly he does not display any devotion towards the material these images are made of. When we put a garland round the portrait or the statue of a departed hero, obviously it is not the paper or the block of stone or metal that is the object of our adoration; they only remind us of the hero to whom we really offer our homage. Similarly the symbol or the image reminds one of God, whom the Hindus worship. As a matter of fact, after the worship is over, the clay-images are often relegated to a river or tank The Hindus therefore regard the *pratim*a as what is represents, namely, God and not as what it is by itself materially.

Of the form of worship, the so-called "material worship" of the Hindus, the real meaning and significance

are not properly understood. God is one, but He is present in every place and in everything, great or small; and this form of worship facilitates the development of that realisation. It has been the privilege of the Hindu mind to view the whole *through* the parts and *in* the parts. He may be said to worship "sticks and stones,"-for, this is the commonest charge against him-but he is really worshipping the One Being *behind* all sticks and stones. He may worship man, he may even worship animals; but he has never worshipped Nature as Nature, or man, as man, or animals as animals. He simply wanted to see behind Nature the hand of the Great Purusha or Being; behind the man he wanted to see the hand of the same Purusha; behind every possible and impossible thing his one desire, his one attempt, was to "witness the Invisible." "If there has ever been born a race which has been able to perceive the existence of the Spirit behind Matter, it is the Hindu race." Says Maitra.

The whole psychology of the Hindus' material worship, then, lies in symbolism; that is to say, he tries to fix his mind upon one particular thing, living or non-living, and thereby to see the Invisible in the visible, the Spirit in the material. In fact this form of worship is a concession as it were, allowed to those who are incapable of rising to abstract conceptions and higher forms of religious belief.

It is the Hindu who, because he understood the real meaning of image-worship, has understood the real meaning of Art. "Beauty is inherent in spirit, not in matter." In making images of gods, the artist has to depend upon spiritual vision only, not upon the appearance of objects perceived by the senses.

The Hindu thus gives "a concrete shape to the dream of his life" which he dreams all his days. With brush or clay he paints or moulds his Ideal as He appears to him in that particular mood of his mind. These images do merely

represent in different spiritual colours and moods what he witnesses in his Supreme God. God is One, the all-pervading Reality, but He is regarded as many, that is, His expressions are manifold and varied. "He is one, Sages call Him by many names." *Ekah san bahudha vicharah.* These names are expressions; the Hindu protrays an image of the expression, that is all.

It is common practice, we saw, that many of the images which the Hindu makes out of clay he throws into water after worshipping the symbol for a few days. He does so because he knows that these images are nothing but are only "the means to an end." The image is to the worshipper his known quantity, which leads him to the Unknown.

Now, one should remember the fact that the rituals of *gauni-bhakti* are meant for cleansing the mind (*chit-shuddhi*) and developing pure and intense love for God. We must not confuse this with the self-same rituals, such as repetition of God's names, hymns, prayers and worship performed by the followers of the Path of Desire. These latter do all these either through fear of punishment for their evil deeds or through a desire for intense sense-enjoyment; they want something of the sense-world in exchange for their worship. Love cannot grow out of such bargaining. Such rituals are only meritorious acts which can bring only the coveted things. These can never lead to supreme love or liberation. Only those who have seen the hollowness of sense-enjoyment and are willing to tread the Path of Renunciation, are fit for taking up any of the *yogas* as the final course of *sadhana*. So from the very beginning the Bhakti-yogi must not pray to God for this or that worldly thing, He should try earnestly to develop real disinterested love for Him.

The aspirant must place himself under the guidance of a liberated sage who can transmit spirituality to him. The Guru chooses for the disciple his *Ishta* (chosen Ideal), that is, the form of God best suited to him. And corresponding

to each divine form there is a sound-symbol or *Mantra*. The Guru imparts to him the suitable *Mantra* that he should repeat every day with devotion. The Guru also teaches him how he is to worship his chosen Ideal. Thus learning the entire preparatory course of Bhakti-yoga from his spiritual guide, he has to practise it with earnest devotion from day to day.

Ishta-nishtha or devotion to the self-same chosen Ideal, is a necessity. One has to stick to the same form of God as his chosen Ideal. Hanumanji, the great *Bhakta* of Sree Ramachandra said:

Shreenathe Janakinathe abhedah Paramatmani, tathapi mama sarvaswah Ramah kamalalochanah.

"I Know that the Lord of Lakshmi and the Lord of Janaki (Sita) are one as the Supreme Spirit (Paramatman), yet my all in all is the lotus-eyed Ramachandra." This is Ishta-nishtha. Without such an unflinching devotion to one's own chosen Ideal, the aspirant cannot make any progress.

Now, love for God becomes easier if we can make the love flow through any of our familiar channels. We know the child's love for the parents, the faithful servant's love for the master; we know what a real friend's love means; the mother's love for her children and the faithful wife's love for her husband are also familiar to us. These are different attitudes (*bhavas*) through which one bears and expresses love towards another. This is why Bhakti-yoga teaches us to take up any of these *bhavas* in relation to our chosen Ideal. One may look upon the chosen Ideal as one's parent, master, friend, child or husband and try to behave and develop love accordingly.

The five *bhavas* (attitudes) prescribed by Bhakti-yoga are *shanta, dasya, sakhya, vatsalya and madhura*. They differ not only in type but also in intensity of feeling. *Shanta-bhava* stands for a rather lukewarm state of love,

and the succeeding *bhavas* are arranged in order of their increasing intensity. In *sakhya* there is a sense of equality. which shows a very advanced state of love. In *vatsalya* ane forgets the powers and glories of God and looks upon Him as one's child. This is typified by Yashoda's love for Krishna; she believes the Lord will go hungry unless she feeds Him. She does not care to think of Him as the Eternal and Omnipotent One. Indeed, love through *vatsalya* reaches a frenzied state. The culmination, however, is reached in *madhurabhava*, where the lover and the beloved become one through the intensity of love. This is typified by Radha's love for Krishna. Saint Mirabai has left a brilliant record in Hindu history of such love.

Now, these *bhavas* are the natural cords of union between soul and soul; they are the various means of reaching the heart of God; for, God is a Heart as well as a Soul. He is absolutely divine and absolutely human, for, "it is perfect humanity that is perfect divinity."

Now, Christianity and Islam both teach, we saw, Bhakti-yoga as the only means of approach to God; but while Christianity has the conception of God as Father, and to Islam God is a great Friend, it is only in Hinduism that we have the conception of God in all the human relationships of life; that is why the Hindus worship God in every relation. Moreover, as we have seen, to love God through a human form is surely the easiest means of approaching Him.

When love for God cultured in this way matures into *para-bhakti*, one reaches the acme of Bliss; verily then he attains God, who is the very core of beauty, of joy and of love. He is the very essence of all enjoyment – *Raso vai sah*. The Hindus do not think that seated somewhere in heaven in awful majesty, God simply deals out reward and punishment to the virtuous and the sinner.

The Hindu idea of Personal God is quite different.

His God is nearer than the nearest, dearer than the dearest. The overflowing affection of the mother for her child is no match for God's love for His devotees. The beauty on the face of any charming thing on earth is only a very faint reflection of His divine beauty. Thus:

"When He shines, everything else shines. By His light all this is lighted." (Kath. Up. V. 15.)

His presence cannot strike awe or terror; on the other hand it thrills one with ecstatic joy; and the bliss is so intense that the Bhakt*a*s want to enjoy it for ever instead of going in for liberation or Mukti. In other words the Bhakt*a*s crave to enjoy the infinite beauty and infinite joy of Personal God, and not to lose themselves in the Impersonal (Brahman). They like "to taste sugar and not to become sugar," so to say.

To such a Bhakta the whole world becomes an object of love and worship. Even in the tiger and the serpent he sees his Beloved. Such blessed souls radiate love, purity and joy wherever they go, and inspire all who come in contact with them with an urge for spiritual growth.

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5

D. Karma-Yoga (Path of Selfless Action)

On the battlefield of Kurukshetra just on the eve of the Great Mah*a*bh*a*rata War, Bhagav*a*n Sree Krishna, the divine Charioteer of Arjuna, the outstanding P*a*ndava hero, pulled up the chariot so that Arjuna might review the opposing armies. Seated on the chariot Arjuna looked round and saw before him his own kinsmen arrayed on both sides ready to kill or die. This sight strikes the weaker chord of his heart, and he becomes full with the note of

morbid pity and fear. He thinks that killing so many people and his own kinsmen for the sake of a kingdom is a sin, and being frightened by the idea he feels almost inclined not to fight. Arjuna here, forgets his own purpose; he thinks that the throne is the real purpose of the battle; but he does not think that as a Kshatriya it is his imperative duty (Dharma) to fight for the cause of righteousness against the unrighteous.

Yudhisthira is the lawful heir to the throne of Hastin*a*vati, but Duryodhana has usurped it. In his reign all wicked men succeed against the good ones, because the king supports them; and it is the holy dharma of a Kshatriya to prevent this state of affairs. Moreover, the wicked Duryodhana is so inexorable that he refuses to cede to Yudhisthira even "that much of land which could be covered by the point of a needle." Yudhisthira is so good that he is ready to be satisfied even with five villages for the five brothers, but Duryodhana would not give, and even Sree Krishna has failed to bring about a compromise (peace) between them. Under the circumstances Arjuna has been called to arms, and as a Kshatriya it is his duty to fight.

But now he is overtaken by a sort of morbid pity, which has originated from selfishness. He is thinking of "my relations, my kingdom." He does not realise that he has raised the sword not for himself, but for all; so he is really moved by selfishness. He wants to be happy with all his friends and relations, and so thinks of his own happiness only. But here he is to fight as a Kshatriya for Dharma, for a righteous cause. This he forgets; he forgets also that a man who dies for a righteous cause goes to heaven.

To correct this terrible mistake of Arjuna and show him the path of his Dharma comes out now the Blessed Lord with his Divine Lore. He thunders into the ears of Arjuna:

"Shake off this cowardice, O mighty hero, ill does it become thee. Thou shouldst have a better knowledge of the Self than this. Look now to the Dharma, and not to the false selfish enjoyment. Let not thee think of profit and loss; but Duty (Dharma) alone should be the ideal. To action alone thou hast the right and never to the fruits thereof."

Now every movement of our life is directed to search for some happiness or other, some sort of bliss; for, as we have seen, the *Atman*, which is inhabiting our body, is of the nature of Bliss itself; and we have lost the real enjoyment of bliss on account of this limited (finite) body, on account of having forgotton our infinite nature. When a dog regards himself a dog, he thinks he is as long as that body, a few feet in length. So, when man not knowing the real infinitude of his inner Spirit imagines that he is a being only three and a half cubits in length, he sets all his heart to satisfy that little self alone, regarding it to be the real fulfilment of the bliss of his inner soul. He may imagine this for births and births, for ages and ages, or even if all these people imagine themselves as finite – still the infinite will never become finite. You may commit this blunder, but your teacher cannot. So the Scriptures advise Renunciation. "Give up these little pleasures of this world and of heaven, they can never give you enjoyment, because they are stricken with pain " But it is not always easy to do that, nor are we always ripe for renunciation. If a man be still under the sway of Avidy*a* and if he still cling to the sensual pleasures, how can he renounce? He may recognise intellectually that this is the ideal, but he may not be able to act up to it. It is only those people who have weighed in the balance the world with all its pleassres and found it wanting are ready for renunciation.

"You, Arjuga, are not yet ripe for it. Only S*a*dhus

and Sannyasins can understand this teaching; but, because you are not so much developed, I shall give you another method better adapted to you, I give you the Path of Karma.

"Karma is the cause of our bondage, but through this Karma you can also reach liberation. I will teach you how by handling the Karma you can free yourself. The path I am going to describe to you is a very grand path indeed, for even a little of this will bring you immense good, will make you free from the bondage of life. Nothing will thwart your course or disturb your mind; nor is there any fear in this path and your aim will not be baffled. You will even overcome the morbid fear of death which has now taken possession of your heart so ignominiously."

Now, whence comes fear? It springs from the idea of death, of losing something we hold very near and dear to our heart, and it is based on Egotism. Fear is always based on the sense of our little embodied "I" or selfishness. But Sree Krishna says, I will point out a path to you by taking which you will lose all fear. When you do not work on your own account for your self-aggrandisement, then this egotism will be thrown out. So let you not look for the fruits of your work. If you can work with this attitude of mind "that your right is only to work and not for the fruits thereof," that they all belong to some one else, then you will neither suffer nor enjoy. Let the Lord have all the fruits of your Karma, make Him the centre of your actions and not your "self." Thus only you can get yourself freed from the gripping shackles of fear.

If you are too much filled with your egotism you always fear. So long as you think that this table does not belong to you, you do not care what happens to it; but if you think that it is your table, then any scratch or a speck of dust on it troubles you. With the sense of "mine" comes the sense of fear. The moment you throw out all idea of "mine" you lose all fear.

So the path of Karma tells you merely to do your duty, for, then only the idea of egotism will be destroyed and with it also all fear, pain and pleasure of life.

"Work you must, Fighting is inevitable for you. Your very nature will goad you to action. Man works to fight against poverty, to fight against ignorance, to fight against defeat. Every work is a fight in this world. But if you regard pleasure and pain, profit and loss, and victory and defeat as all alike, and then fight, no harm will befall you. Regard all sense-pleasures only as misery.* If therefore with a heart full of renunciation you go on working, then you will not fall into misery. If you wish to work in the world, this is the only method which, when followed, is able to cut the fetters of your Karma. Be equanimous to both pain and pleasure. This equanimity of mind towards all the dual expressions of life is known as Yoga, and the Yoga applied to our action in life is Karma-yoga"

And the Lord, Sree Krishna, exhorts Arjuna, and through him the whole of humanity, to fight, to give battle to, the unrighteous, to the unholy, to the enemy of our progress in life, without fear or remorse, being steadfast in that yoga.

Thus, struggling-fighting with the enemies, internal as well as external-doing the duties of life for their own sake, without caring for the results, without attachment, keeping the heart always on the Lord, on you proceed in the path of life, O man! till you reach the goal.

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* A fish is hooked by sweet bait, only to be taken out of water, killed, dressed and cooked. So these pleasures are but baits thrown out into the waters of the stream of life to hook us all up to be consumed by that all-devouring Death.

6

Now most commentators, however, stress one or another Yoga as the actual teaching of Sree Krishna Formerly Jnana-yoga or Bhakti-yoga was stressed. To-day much emphasis is put on Karma-yoga, as the primary teaching of the Gita. The truth is however, that when Sree Krishna speaks of one yoga he naturally puts extreme importance upon that particular one, so much so each of the yogas in turn assumes the same importance as the others. Throughout, the Gita insists on the performance of one's duties of life with a heart, free from attachment and thoughts of worldly gain, and devoted entirely to the adoration of God. It condemns in unmistakable terms the acceptance of monastic life if the spirit of renunciation is lacking in the heart, removing thereby the misconception that the ideal of renunciation can be practised only away from family or soceity, in a lonely cave or within the walls of a monastery.

And the perfect man of the Gita is one who is active, as well as meditative, who is devotional and at the same time possesses the Knowledge of the Self. In fact in the Gita, Karma has been harmonised with Jnana, Jnana with Karma and Bhakti, and in and through the combined ways of Jnana, Karma and Bhakti runs the thread of Rajayoga, the path of meditation, which insists on poise, self-control, tranquility and meditative life.

The Hindus, we have seen, have understood the value of concentration, and their sages understood in a marvellous manner the variety of human experience and the consequent various needs of human nature. God is all that not only the human mind, but also the human heart can conceive. He is both Personal and Impersonal, with form and without form, both manifest and unmanifest, the One and the Many.

The images used in worship, we said, are generally those of some Avataras like Rama and Krishna; since the

Vedic times we no longer have Nature-Gods and godesses, of which so far as is known, images were ever made. But God is worshipped under the Trinity of Brahma (The Creater), Shiva (the Destroyer of evil, the Purifier) and Vishnu (the Preserver and the Saviour)

Now, the highest philosophical speculations of the Hindus have always posited two ultimate principles; *Purusha* and *Prakriti*; one is the principle of permanence, and the other of change. These two principles correspond in a general way to the idea of God and Nature in the West, Nature in this sense including humanity. Again, Prakriti represents the feminine element, and Purusha, the masculine element in the universe. This duality runs through the trinity of the Intellect, the Will and the Heart as expressed in the Ved*a*nta philosophy, where Purusha is Ishwara or Brahma, and Prakriti is M*a*ya; in the followers of Shiva, where Shiva is Purusha, and the Divine Will as Mother is Prakriti; and in Vaishnavism, where Krishna is the Purusha and Prakriti is R*a*dha, the perfect Devotion of the Heart to the Beloved.

CHAPTER XIV

SUN AND SUNLIGHT

Light is often the symbol used in all climes and ages to convey in a concrete form various high truths to the human mind. Nothing in the Universe is so beautiful, so enchanting and so gladdening to the heart and eyes as the rise of the golden Sun, "the coming of Light after darkness." The Hindus praise him thus:

Namah savitre jagadeka chakshuse Jagatprasooti sthiti nasha hetave.

"Adoration to Thee, O Sun, the Eye of the universe, the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer of the world."

Light is always indicative of Knowledge, and Darkness, its opposite, of Ignorance. Now, the Sun is a direct representation of the Supreme Lord and is known as:

Soorya Narayanah Savitra mandala Madhyavartee Narayanah.

Moreover, it is said, in the beginning of the Creation it is God Narayana Himself, who is manifest as the Sun; the Sun is on that account considered one among the Pancha-Devatas. Narayana is the Saviour of Souls.

Apart from this, the Sun is the Greatest among all the direct representations of Divine Glory and Effulgence, the Centre of the Universe, the Regulator, the Maker and Measurer of Time, the Maintainer of the world, the Sustainer of life and Supporter of all things, animate and inanimate.

Soorya Atma jagatah tasthushascha.

" From the time you established in the Heavens that Bright Light, the Sun, from that time the Solar system has been regulated. We offer oblations to thee!" (Rigveda) Again,

Sa esha vaishwanaro vishwasya prano Agnih udayate.

"Thus rises He, the Prana of Universal Life and Universal Form, the Fire." (Prasna Up. I. 7)

The Shruties thus assert that the Sun and Fire are both manifestations of the same Prana or Universal and All-pervading Energy. Also:

"(The wise know him who is) of Universal Form, full of rays, Omniscient, the Highest Goal of All-life, the One Effulgent and Great, the giver of heat – there, He rises, the Sun of a thousand rays, who is manifold in existence, and the life of all creatures." (Ibid. 1. 8.) Again,

"This (yonder) Sun is himself Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Skanda, Prajapati, the great Indra, Kubera (the giver of wealth), Yama (the god of Death), the Moon, Varuna (the Lord of the waters), the Manes, the Vasus, the Sadhyas the Ashwini-twins, the Maruts, Manu, Wind, Fire – all the

Beings, their Vital Breath, the Maker of the seasons, and the creator of the Ocean of Light." (*Adityahridaya*)

The sun is also *sarvabhootabha vodbhava* or the cause of the evolution of all beings; and modern Science is in full agreement with this view of the Vedic Aryans, namely, that "the all-energising solar radiation has been the most powerful environmental factor in the evolution of life, which has culminated in the human being." Thus,

"Obeisance to the Sun, the support and imminent soul and basis of the universe, its well-wisher, the Self-born, the Eye of the entire world, the foremost of the gods, of immeasurable splendour." (Samba Purana)

Also, *Jadandha mookan badiramsch kubjan sadadru kushtan krimibhih sravat vrinan karoshi taneva punar-navan yada tada maha karuni kaya te namah.*

"Obeisance to you, the great God of compassion, who can rejuvenate the dull or the torpid, the blind, the dumb, the deaf, the stunted, the herpetic, the leprous, and those who have ulcers dripping with maggots." (Ibid.)

This latter principle, it must be pointed out here, forms exactly the scientific basis of the modern Sun-cult with its sun-baths and other means of exposure to the ultra-violet rays in the treatment of bodily disease or deformity. Roller credits sunlight on the skin with favourably influencing the blood, the internal secretions of the endocrine or ductless glands, the digestive function, and the general weight, strength and growth. Further, the regulation of circulation and respiration helps, he says, to make the musculature firmer and better than the best massage. Cases of carbuncles, chronic eczema, lupus and alopecia (baldness from disease of the hairs) are rapidly benefited by exposure to sunlight. Even war-wounds exposed to sun and air have rapidly healed; in fact there is no better dressing than sunlight. Sunlight is known to be a powerful agent in maintaining a proper calcium-balance in the

system and building up its bony frame, and this fundamental importance has been proved both in health and disease.

A working labourer with his scant cloth, whom we might be inclined to despise is really a wiser man than ourselves, for he allows himself to be nourished and strengthened by the sunshine and fresh air that feed him perhaps more than the rice or the ragi that he eats.

Sunshine is even reputed to give anti-rachitic properties to food-stuffs like cereals, milk, meat etc. and to accelerate the growth of animal and vegetable life. Sunlight retards the growth of all bacteria and various protozoa and exerts a most favourable action on Tuberculous patients. Various vermin and insect-pests are readily destroyed by sunlight, and decomposing organic matter is rapidly changed into innocuous compounds.

Even the primitive man we have already seen, evidently recognised this fundamental importance of sunlight for his very existence, and worshipped the Sun as his God. But with the development of culture and the dawn of civilisation he gradually began to retreat from the "light." First, he excluded the sunlight from his body under the impulse of modesty or adornment or protection from heat and cold, by clothing it. Next, he devised dwellings in which he spent mostly his time shielding himself and his belongings from the Elements but excluding the beneficient rays of the Sun. Thus from the bright day-light of the farm he led himself into the shadows of the factory, and when he built the modern city with its tall edifices, cramped houses and narrow streets he made direct sunshine a comparative stranger; and when finally its atmosphere became polluted with smoke, dust, gasolene fumes and toxic gases from industries and overcrowding, the most vital and energising rays of the Sun were practically shut off from him.

In our Country we have always had an abundance of sunlight, but our perversity has ordained that this great life-giving principle should be debarred from many. The purdah-system, as at present, seen among some communities in our Country keeps many women and children practically shut off from sunlight. Such people easily fall a prey to tuberculosis and other chest complaints, and even adults are affected with rickets. The generally lowered vitality, the increased tendency to rickets and anaemia, lowered resistence-power to diseases like tuberculosis among the "slum-dwellers" of our towns are accounted for by the fact that our streets are often too narrow to admit more than a sampling of sunlight, and there is lack of open space for play and relaxation in the sunshine.

It is a mistake, however, to suppose that Hindu women are always shut up behind the *purdah*. They are not, but they do not run about in search of diversion. There seems to be a remarkable idea current in the West, that the Hindu wife never sees any man but her husband. This is manifestly absurd. In many Hindu families there are often as many as a hundred people living together in harmonious freedom under one roof, or more truly many roofs, since the Hindu houses are built around court-yards or in the form of Agraharams. Thus the family forms a community by itself, all the members of which the women naturally see more or less. Moreover, the friends of her childhood, men she played with from babyhood, as well as the friends of her husband, father or brothers are informally welcomed as of the family.

With all her care for the home and the hearth, she goes out as much as she wishes, she visits her neighbours her women-friends and relatives, goes to distant places even from country to country.

Where else in the world lived there a race, the women of which went about, before railways and steam-ships, on

foot from pilgrimage to pilgrimage, year in and year out? Who are the people that gather round these sacred places? Who have kept the sacred tradition of these historic Abodes of Peace? It is the Hindu women.

Some of them wear a veil, but that veil of the Hindu woman, which covers the head is not to veil her face, but to shadow to a certain extent "the purity of her symbolic face, in which she has incarnated the goodness of love and goodness of purity." She is pure. From beneath the veil of her face, even if covered, there comes "like a lightning flash the beauty and the intensity of sweetness that lies behind." She is matchless, matchless because of her devotion as well as her courage.

The chief characteristics of Hindu women, says Maitra, are courage, humanity and sweetness, and above all a belief in God, which they have acquired through their path of devotion.

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2
Worship and Prayer

Material worship as by the use of images symbolising the Ideal is the first step, say the Hindu Scriptures; then, comes the repetition of the Lord's names and singing of His praise; the next course is the mental worship (or meditation) and the final stage is the realisation of the "One without a second."

Thus man comes to take up higher and higher forms of spiritual practice in his march towards the attainment of the Highest, and in this respect hymns and prayers do form an important aid as we have just seen.

In all ages and in all religions the spiritual aspirants

and devotees have given natural expression to their innermost yearnings and noblest sentiments in the form of hymns, psalms, praises and prayers. Sometimes they sing and pray out of the fulness of their hearts "dwelling in exalted moods untouched by cares and wants."

But in most cases it is a consciousness of limitations and imperfections, or the sense of misery and helplessness that makes the weary and struggling souls turn to the Omnipotent and Ever-perfect Being for solace and succour.

"Four types of virtuous men worship Me, O Arjuna— the distressed, the seeker of Knowledge, the seeker of enjoyment and the wise" says Sree Krishna, "of these the wise man, ever steadfast, (and fired) with devotion to the One, excels; for supremely dear am I to the wise, and he is dear to Me." (Gita VII. 16. 17)

"Noble indeed are they all, but the wise man I regard as My very Self; for with the mind stead-fast, he is established in Me alone, as the "Highest Resort."

(Gita VII. 18)

It is natural for the man of spiritual illumination to worship God, to meditate on Him, to speak or sing of His glory out of his overflowing love and devotion. But the case of the others is different. "Buffeted by the troubles of life or worried by the consciousness of sin and realising the uselessness of human aid, the care-worn Soul turns to the Divine for safety and protection. The seeker of enjoyments, finding all human efforts fruitless looks up in his helplessness to God for the fulfilment of his desires. The seeker of Knowledge may not have any worldly trouble or desires to disturb him, but he feels in his heart of hearts "a soul-hunger, a sense of void or the misery of a limited existence, that nothing in the world can remove." His soul yearns for the higher life and in the course of his search he comes to God, the source of Peace and Blessedness.

Thus to all mankind God is a constitutional necessity. And so great is this need that even sceptics in their helplessness and despair have been heard to cry out to the Almighty for solace and support. Even the so-called agnostic's prayer–"Oh God, if there be a God, save my Soul, if I have a Soul," however humorous it may sound at first, contains a deep truth, that cannot but be recognised by the sympathetic student of religious psychology.

Sings Saint Purandhar Das, the great Bhakta of Sree Vitobha of Pandharpur (representing Sree Krishna standing on a brick (Mahrati), *vita* = brick, *ubha* - stand, stop for a while):

"What ails me, O Great Healer, I know not.
Pray feel my hand, and say what matters me!
Eyes have I, but they see not Thy Holy Form;
Ears have I, but they hear not the holy psalms sung
in Thy praise;
Tongue have I, but it uttereth not Thy Holy Name,
Nor relisheth the sweetness of Tirth of Thy sacred Feet.
Hands have I, but they serve Thee not,
Head have I, but it bendeth not at Thy Holy Spirit.
Nose have I but it smelleth not
The sweet fragrance of Tulasi basil.
Feet have I but they move not to Thy Holy Shrine.
Hail, O Protector of the helpless and of the distressed!
Thou art my only hope, pray heal my ailment
And free me from this samsara for ever!"

A grand expression indeed of the soul-hunger of these great Souls!

ಯಾವ ರೋಗವೊ ಎನಗೆ ದೇವ ಧನ್ವಂತ್ರಿ ।
ಸಾವದಾನದಿ ಕೈಯು ಪಿಡಿದು ನೋಡಯ್ಯ ॥ ಪಲ್ಲ ॥
ಹರಿ ಮೂರ್ತಿಗಳು ಎಂನ ಕಂಗಳಿಗೆ ಕಾಣಿಸವು
ಹರಿ ವಾರ್ತೆಗಳು ಎನ್ನ ಕಿವಿಕೇಳವು

ಹರಿಯ ನಾಮಾ ಮೃತವು ಬಾರದೀನಾಲಿಗೆಗೆ
ಹರಿಪಾದ ತೀರ್ಥವೂ ಸವಿತೋರದಯ್ಯ ॥ ೧ ॥
ಹರಿಪಾದ ಸೇವೆಗೆ ಹಸ್ತಗಳು ಚಲಿಸವು
ಹರಿಗುರು ಭಜಕರಿಗೆ ತಲೆಬಾಗದು ।
ಹರಿ ನಿರ್ಮಾಲ್ಯವು ಘ್ರಾಣಿಸದು ನಾಸಿಕವು
ಹರಿಯ ಯಾತ್ರೆಗೆ ಎಂನ ಕಾಲೇಳದಯ್ಯಾ ॥ ೨ ॥
ಅನಾಥ ಬಂಧೋ ವಿಜಯ ವಿಟ್ಠಲರಾಯಾ
ಎನ್ನ ಭಾಗ್ಯದ ನಿಧಿಯೋ ನೀನೆ ಎಂದು ।
ಅನಾದಿ ಭವದಿ ಬಂದ ರೋಗವನು ಕಳೆದು
ನಿಶ್ಚಿಂತ ನಾಗಿರಸಯ್ಯ ಎನ್ನ ॥ ೩ ॥

These sentiments run very close indeed to those expressed in the description of the *bhakti* of King Ambarish in the Bhagavata (Sk. 9. Ad. 4) Infact they are in the very words of the Author, the Sage Vyasa.

3
Japa

Japa is also one mode of Prayer and consists in the recitation with devotion and faith, of God's adorable Names or Epithets (*guna-namani*) which are His infinite excellences and glorious attributes; and the benefits that are said to accrue to the devotee from such adoration are infinite indeed. For example: "That man, who with devotion and perseverance daily recites or even hears the one-thousand names of Sree Vishnu, never meets with any evil here or hereafter, he who aspires the merit of righteousness shall succeed in getting it, and he who desires for wealth shall get likewise. The man of pleasure shall have his desire satisfied and he who desires for offspring shall acquire offspring. That man who with devotion and with heart wholly turned towards Him recites those names of Sree Vasudeva every day after having purified himself succeeds in acquiring great fame, a position of eminence

among his kinsmen, and lastly that which is of the highest benefit to man, viz., Moksha or Liberation from samsara (rounds of birth and death). He never meets with fear at any time; he acquires great prowess and energy. The sick becomes hale, the afflicted becomes free from affliction, the affrighted free from fear and he that is plunged in calamity becomes free. Such a person succeeds in quickly surmounting all difficulties, becomes freed from all sins and attains the Eternal Brahman.

Sree Vasudeva's devotee shall never encounter evil, he becomes freed from the fear of birth, death, decrepitude and disease; he acquires felicity of soul, forgiveness, prosperity, intelligence, memory and fame. Neither wrath nor jealousy nor cupidity nor evil thoughts ever appear in those men of righteousness devoted to that Foremost of Beings."

The same note is struck here also,—"that the Supreme Being destroys all sins, when meditated upon, seen, sung, praised or prostrated. Hence He is Supreme Purity, Paramapuman. He destroys the Karma, good or bad, that leads to the bondage of Samsara and its cause Avidya—and thus grants Emanicipation. When he thus destroys all grief by simple meditation why not one leave aside all other objects of thought and constantly meditate upon Him?

This system of adoration of God by His names (Namastotrani) had its origin in the Vedas, and the association of the names of the major and minor Deities of the Hindus with One Divinity emphasises the fundamental belief in the Only Divine Existence-*ekam sat* "That, the neuter That."

This adoration by name is characteristic not only of the Hindus, but the Christians and Muslims as well. The early Romans considered it necessary that in their Prayers the address to God should consist of definite reference to some of His significant quality or phase of divine activity.

The Quran also insists similarly on calling Him by a hundred Names beginning and ending with the Name "Allah," these names being His attributes

Now, the word Japa has been amplified into:

"That which does away with the sins committed in one's whole life-time is Japa." Again,

"Japa is said to be the foremost of all Dharmas; also Japa begins with *ahimsa* or non-injury to beings." (Mahabharata)

(This is the reply of Sree Bheeshma, the Grand Sire, given from his death-bed of arrows (*sharatalpa*) to Yudhisthira (Dharmaputra) to the latter's query:

"Which Dharma, Your honour, (addressing to Bheeshma) considereth the greatest and best to relieve men and beings from the rounds of birth and death?")

Also, "But undoubtedly a Brahmin reaches the Highest goal by Japa only; that is to say, he will be above all grief no matter whether he performs other rites or neglects them." (Manu)

Also, "Of yajnas I am the yajna of Japa (silent prayer)." Gita X. 25

The Vishnu Pur*a*na supports this view whole-heartedly when it observes:

"That which one achieved through meditation in the Krita-yuga (Satyayuga, Golden age), through sacrifices in the Treta-yuga (Silver age) and through worship in the Dw*a*para (Brazen-age) may be achieved in the present Kali-yuga (Iron age) by reciting the names of Sree Keshava."

I hope I have, with enough stress and at sufficient length, dwelt above upon the utterances of the Divine Seers of yore in order to convince the reader of the power and fruitfulness of Prayer to the Lord. If however, the sceptic (*samshayatma*) should militate against them on the

ground that they are "unscientific" (in the sense they are not borne out by actual proofs) we have hereunder the opinion in his own words, of one of the greatest Scientists of our days, Dr. Alexis Carrel, M. D. of the American Rockefeller Institute, the Nobel Prize winner for Biological Research, who died only on the 5th November 1944 at Paris at the 71st year. He says: "Even our slightest impulse towards Prayer has a dynamic beneficial effect upon our lives. Prayer is not only worship, it is also an invisible emanation of man's worshipping spirit, the most powerful form of energy that one can generate.

"The influence of Prayer on the human mind and body is as demonstrable as that of the secreting glands; and its results can be measured in terms of physical buoyancy, greater intellectual vigour, moral stamina and a deeper understanding of the realities underlying human relationships.

"If one should make a habit of sincere Prayer his life will be noticeably and profoundly altered."

Continues Dr. Carrel: "Prayer stamps with its indelible mark our actions and demeanour. A tranquility of bearing, a facial and bodily repose are observed in those whose inner lives are thus enriched; within the depths of consciousness a flame kindles, and man sees "himself." He discovers his selfishness, his silly pride, his fears, his greed, his blunders. He develops a sense of moral obligation, intellectual humility. Thus begins a journey of the Soul towards the Realm of Grace."

Continues he further: "Prayer is force as real as terrestrial gravity. As a physician I have often seen men, after all other therapy has failed, lifted out of disease and melancholy by the serene efforts of Prayer. It is the only power in the world that seems to overcome the so-called "Laws of Nature;" the occasions on which Prayer has dramatically done have been termed "miracles" But a

constant quicker miracle takes place hourly in the hearts of men and women, who have discovered that Prayer supplies them with a steady flow of sustaining power in their lives."

Dr. Carrel, who has long been impressed by the fact that many of life's phenomena cannot be scientifically explained, knows for example, he says, that miracles of healing are possible, and that he actually spent weeks at Lourdes studying them, and will never forget "seeing a cancerous sore shrivel to a scar before my very eyes."

(Dr. Carrel invented the "artificial heart" in collaboration with Col. A. Lindbergh. Dr. Carrel who had been ill with heart disease became convinced early in his studies that if men could rid themselves of toxic products, most of them would live for a century or more. He went to the Rockefeller Institute for medical research in 1906, where he built a strange "hospital" with livers and hearts as "patients.").

In this connection it must be mentioned that Physicians in ancient India never failed to include in their prescriptions to the sick an appropriate Japa for the illness to propitiate the particular Deity influencing the disease, and also a change of climate to a spa or watering-place as Tirtha-*yatra* or pilgrimage, and Fasting on particular occasions. And modern Science explains their benefits as below:

4

Tirtha - *Yatra* (Pilgrimage)

A journey to the holy shrines at high altitudes, baths in the sacred rivers, springs or the sea, and general change of climate, company and environment entailed in the Tirtha-yatras or pilgrimages as advised by the Scriptures, for certain bodily and mental ailments, have in addition to their spiritual value the same benefits as do accrue by a

"change of air" which the Western physicians recommend in cases of diseases of a chronic or long-standing nature, bodily or mental.

The physiological effects of high altitudes by reason of a lowered atmospheric pressure is to increase the rate and depth of respiration and the rate of the pulse; the climate of high altitudes, moreover, is cold and bracing, the air often dry and is in constant motion, and free from impurities of any sort including the microbes of disease, which rapidly diminish as we go higher and higher. These factors combined with a certain amount of exercise required to walk uphill and greater activity possible in a cool climate do contribute largely to the healthiness of hill-stations It must be added, however, that the effects of climate on the body apart from those of sunshine, are directly proportional to the time spent in the open air and the extent the body is kept exposed to the movements of air.

A change of climate has often in itself, a favourable effect on a person's mental attitude also. The fact that he is undertaking the *yatra* for the express purpose of getting some benefit, frequently arouses in him a greater expectancy and hopefulness of favourable result. This effect is more psychic and is, in addition to the change in the physical condition of the surrounding air, causing "new stimuli to the nerve cells of the body."

So also is the effect of sea-air and sea-baths. Apart from the obvious changes of environments and better hygiene of sea-shore, the beneficial effects of sea-air and sea-bath are largely due to the increased activity of the skin consequent on the movements of air, as well as to the direct ultra-violet light and that reflected from the surface of the water, and the effect of sea-water itself.

Hindus have for ages recognised the value of mineral waters and of hot-springs, which are often charged with

more than the usual quantity of mineral matter. In many cases these, like most unusual natural phenomena have been held sacred, and have consequently become places of resort for pilgrims from great distances. As instances of this sort may be cited the hot springs at Manikaru in Kulu, where, says a friend, the pilgrims even cook the rice in the hot-springs emerging from the shingle-beds close to the ice-cold stream of the Parvati River; the hot-water is also led into the neighbouring temple and the rest-house for baths; and the water is reputed to be efficacious in cases of rheumatism. At Lasundra in the Kira District and at Vajreshwari or Vajradevi, in the Thana District of Bombay (which latter the Author visited in July 1937 when it was raining heavily) springs of sulphurous water having a temperature of 115° F or even more are also resorted to by Hindu pilgrims.

Other springs occur along the foot-hills of the Himalayas in the Kharagpur hills. The springs at Jwalamukhi in Kanhra District contain bromides and iodides of Potassium and Sodium, and the water is, therefore, a remedy for goitre (Derbyshire neck).

The Radio-activity of most of the thermal springs is well-known. The springs of Tuwa on the line from Bombay to Godhra (Panchmahals) have been found to possess unusually high radio-active properties.

The number of diseases claimed to be relieved or cured by mineral water is almost prodigious. The list mainly includes psychic disorders, chronic disorders of the stomach, the liver and the bowels, certain metabolic disorders like gout, rheumatism, obesity and diabetes; epilepsy, insomnia and melancholia, and chronic skin diseases including leprosy.

How far the minerals, the radio-activity or the mode of life in leisure away from the domestic worries with diversion into the *Bhajan* and music, swimming and routine

exercise are responsible, it is difficult to assess, but that most patients derive immense benefits from a change to those spas, there can be no gain saying, It certainly tends towards spiritual attainment.

5

Fasting

The adaptation of the body to lack of food has played an important part in the survival of the human race; and in primitive life man was subjected to long periods of fasting: when want did not compel him to starve, he voluntarily deprived himself of food.

All religions have insisted upon the need for fasting. It is said to be an easy way for man "to square himself with his Creator" if by fasting is meant the mere abstinence from food. But with Spiritual Leaders it means much more than that. With Gandhiji, for example, "it is the purification of the Soul as much as of the body, it is the feeding of the Soul at a time when the body is denied food."

Explained physiologically, privation of food at first brings on a sensation of hunger, occasionally some nervous stimulation, and later a feeling of weakness. But it also determines certain hidden phenomena, which are more important. For example, the sugar of the liver and the fatty deposit under the skin are mobilised, and also the proteins of the muscles and glands; all the organs sacrifice their own substance in order to maintain blood, heart and brain in a normal condition.

Physical work, external cold, fever, worry and strong emotions hasten death from fasting; but it would appear that previous experience of fasting helps to train the body to the more economical use of the body-reserves and thus lengthen life. This last, perhaps explains the several prolonged fasts, that Gandhiji could stand one after another inspite of advancing age.

Fasting, thus, inculcates "the principle of self-sacrifice for the benefit of the commonwealth of our being."

As to the *punyaphalam* or spiritual influence of fasting we have in our times in Gandhiji, a modern Ambarisha, as so many of his fasts have in the past been instrumental in bringing about peace and quiet all over the Country, and even his latest, a mere threatened one has dramatically brought about the much needed peace and solace to the afflicted populace of Bengal and Bihar. To-day, an old man of 78, he is walking "unbowed by the weight of many sorrows and disappointments to preach his gospel of peace and courage to a sore-distracted land." Maybe he is the Buddha come back to life to preach his message of *ahimsa*. These are undoubtedly great Souls, worthy sons of Mother India.

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CHAPTER XV

FEAR AND WORRY

Our thoughts, various mental states and emotions do all produce their effects on the physical body. Suppose a telegram brings sudden and unhappy news, you grow pale, you tremble and you might even fall into a fit; or, a friend says something to you at the dinner table, something which is unpleasant, you feel hurt by it, you have been enjoying your dinner, but from that moment you have no appetite for food. Again, a sudden emergency arises, you stand trembling and weak with fear and powerless to move, or you are for a moment dominated by a fit of anger and for a few hours afterwards you complain of violent headache—all this because your thought and emotions have produced their effects on your system. For the same reason people given greatly to mental worry cannot be strong and vigorous or active.

We have several well authenticated cases of the relation of the mind to body-functions like the following:

A mother has been dominated for a few moments by a sudden and intense passion of anger, and the child at the breast has died within the next hour; so much poisoned became her milk under the influence of anger. In other cases similar fits of anger on the part of the mother have caused severe illness and convulsions in the child at the breast

It is well known that sudden and violent emotions have not only weakened the heart but have caused death or insanity.

It has been discovered by scientists that there is a chemical difference between that sudden cold sweat of a person under a deep sense of guilt and the ordinary perspiration, and the state of the mind can sometimes be deter-

mined by chemical analysis of the perspiration of a criminal. It is well known that fear has killed thousands, while courage is a great invigorator. Small mental emotion often causes giddiness and vomiting; extreme anger or fright may produce jaundice. A violent paroxysm of rage has caused apoplexy and death. And indeed in more than one instance a single night of mental agony has wrecked lives. Grief, long standing jealousy, constant worry and corroding anxiety have in several instances developed insanity. Sick thoughts and discordant moods are the natural atmosphere of disease, and crime is engendered and thrives in the miasma of the mind.

That mental worry causes indigestion, ulcer of the stomach and certain other illnesses has been proved at the Tavistock Clinic and the Royal Free Hospital, London. Infact it is said that ulcer of the stomach is in origin a disturbance of the mind and deserves no more and no less attention than does dyspepsia, which is also in many cases an imaginary malady.

In regard to the mode of operation of these mental states, emotions and passions physiologists say it is due to the activities of the Endocrine organs, or Ductless glands, which act not singly but more or less in co-ordination with one another.

"The whole of human life" says Waldo Trine "is cause and effect. There is no such thing in it as chance, nor is there even in all the wide universe. Are we not satisfied with whatever comes into our lives? The thing to do, then, is not to spend time in railing against the imaginary something we create and call "fate," but to look to the within, and change the causes at work there in order that things of a different nature may come, for there will come exactly what we cause to come.

"And then whatever does come to one depends for its effects entirely upon his mental attitude towards it. Does

this or that occurrence or condition cause you annoyance? Very well, it causes you annoyance and so disturbs your peace because you allow it to.

"You are born to have absolute control over your own dominion, but if you voluntarily hand over this power, even it be for a little while, to some one or to something else, then you of course become the creature, the one controlled."

There is probably no agent that brings us more undesirable conditions than *fear*. We should live in fear of nothing. An old French proverb says:

"Some of your grief you have cured,
And the sharpest you still have survived.
But what torments of pain you endured
From evils that never arrived!"

In other words, most of our sharpest griefs are of our own making, of our own imagination.

"Where are you going?" asked an Eastern Pilgrim on meeting the Plague one day. "I am going to Bagdad to kill 5000 people" was the reply. A few days later the same pilgrim met the Plague returning; "you told me you were going to Bagdad to kill 5000 people" said he, "but instead, you killed 50,000." "No" said the Plague, "I killed only 5000 as I told you I would, the others died of fright."

Fear can paralyse any muscle in the body, fear affects the flow of the blood, likewise the normal and healthy action of all the life forces. Fear can make the body rigid, motionless and powerless to move.

Fear and worry, then, and all kindred mental states will bring their own peculiar type of ailment. An inordinate love of gain, a close fisted hoarding disposition will have kindred effects. Anger, jealousy, malice, continual fault-finding, lust,-each has its own peculiar corroding, weakening, tearing down effects.

"The bodies of almost untold numbers living their one-sided, unbalanced lives" says Trine, "are evey year, through

these influences, weakening and falling by the way side long before thier time; poor houses! intended to be beautiful temples brought to desolation by their ignorant, reckless, deluded tenants!"

Fear is the greatest disease of modean civilisation, "the great reservoir of human unhappiness" as Sir Herbert Barker puts it, and the tragedy of it lies in the fact that fear is preventable. There was an old man who when he came to die sighed: "I have had a great many troubles in my life;" he then paused and added: "But most of them never happened." Fear often lies buried deep down in the child's mind for years. During the Great War a medical officer working in a forward dressing station was in the habit of dashing into the open whenever heavy shelling began; he was ordered to take cover, but each time the shells came over, out he rushed. It was obvious that under shell-fire the dug-out dressing station possessed more terrors for him than the open. He was sent to the base-hospital and subjected to psycho-analysis. It was found out that as a small boy he had been imprisoned in a dark cellar with a ferocious dog, which had attacked him. The manner in which this "buried" fear was acting upon his mind having been explained to him he returned to duty - "cured".

2
Faith and Hope

While speaking of Tirtha-*ya*tra and of Fasting we alluded to their benefits being to a certain extent psychic also; that is to say, dependent on the mental attitude of faith, cheer and hopefulness, especially from a previous knowledge that several others have been similarly benefited by such rites. In fact, this forms the chief principle underlying most of the ceremonies, rites and rituals, prayers, *Homas*, etc. not only of Hindus but of the followers of all the principal religions of the World. It is also the basis of

Christian Science and of what is known in modern Psychology as Auto-suggestion. While Christian Science is a pseudo-religion, Auto-suggestion is purely a scientific process having a rationale based on the discoveries of Psychology.

3
Thought is a Force

A physician goes to see a patient but may not give the patient any medicine at the first visit; yet the patient says that he feels better after the Doctor's visit; why? Because the physician has carried with him the spirit of health, so to say; he has carried brightness of tone and disposition, he has carried hope into the sick chamber and has left it there. In fact, the very hope and good cheer the physician had carried with him has had a subtle and powerful influence on the patient's mind; and this mental state imparted by the physician has in its turn its effects upon the patient's body, and so through the instrumentality of the *mental suggestion* healing proceeds.

"Know, then, whatever cheerful and serene
Supports the mind, supports the body too.
Hence, the most vital movement mortals feel,
Is *hope*, the balm and life-blood of the soul."

We sometimes hear a person in weak health saying to another, "I always feel better when you come." There is a deep scientific reason underlying this statement, for "the tongue of the wise is health."

In many cases of distress in the chest from grave disease of the lungs or the heart, where hypnotics-or sleep-producing drugs are, as a rule, contra-indicated, often a dose of simple water, but sweetened, coloured and flavoured and administered with a little impressive ceremony, acts like a charm in at once securing the much needed sleep, but of a natural and refreshing character.

Now, full, rich and abounding health is the normal and the natural condition of life; anything else is an abnormal condition, and abnormal conditions as a rule come through perversions. God never created sickness, suffering and disease, they are man's own creations, they come through his violating the Laws under which he lives. So used are we to seeing them, that we come gradually to think of them as natural and look upon them as a matter of course.

Like produces like the universe through. Hatred, envy, malice, jealousy and revenge, all have children. Every bad thought breeds others, and each of these goes on and on, ever reproducing itself until our world is peopled with their offspring The true physician and parent of the future will not medicate the body with drugs so much as the mind with principles. The coming mother will teach her child to assuage (calm) the fever of anger, hatred, malice with the great panacea of the world–Love. The coming physician will teach people to cultivate cheerfulness, goodwill and noble deeds for a health tonic as well as a heart tonic, and that a merry heart does more good than all the drugs of the Pharmacopia.

It is strictly true to say that some people are older at 40 than others are at 70. This teaches us that it is not the mere passage of time that makes us old, but what is happening during that time in our bodies. People who lead wise lives, especially people who do not eat too much or drink too much, and who get enough sleep, (during which the body gets rid of and destroys many of the poisons it produces in the day–time) do not grow old nearly so quickly as other people. Also this is true of people who have quiet minds; great worry or sorrow "ages" people as we say; it interferes with the power of the body to recover from exertion and to get rid of its poisons; and so, unhappy or fretful people get old more quickly than those who lead calm and happy lives. The people who take

longest to get old are those who act on two good proverbs:

"The best Doctors are Dr. Quiet, Dr. Diet and Dr. Merry-man," and

"Joy and Temperance and Repose,
Slam the door on the Doctor's nose."

Note: Though a digression from the main theme of this work, my apology for further consideration of this subject is its importance to parents, teachers and doctors in improving the health and moulding the character of the younger generation.

4
Auto – Suggestion

Until about 60 years ago Psychology was considered as a dull and seemingly useless classification of our conscious faculties. Since then, however, the Science has undergone a great change,–from a pre-occupation with the Conscious mind it has turned to the Sub-conscious–to the vast area of mental activity which exists outside the circle of our awareness.

Now, the investigation of the Sub-conscious is a science in itself, and there are certain established facts (and experimentally proved) which form the basis of Auto-suggestion. They are: –

(1) The Sub-conscious is the store-house of memory, where every impression we receive from the earliest infancy to the last hour of life is recorded with the minutest accuracy. These impressions or memories, however, are not inert and quiescent, like the marks on the vulcanite records of a gramophone; they are vitally active, each one forming a thread in the texture of our personality. The sum-total of all these impressions is the man himself, the Ego, the form through which the general life is

individualised. The outerman is but a mask; the real self dwells behind the veil of the Sub-conscious.

(2) The Sub-conscious is also a power-house. It is dominated by feeling, and feeling is the force which impels our lives. It provides the energy for conscious thought and action, and for the performance of the vital processes of the body.

(3) Finally the Sub-conscious plays the part of supervisor over our physical processes. Digestion, assimilation, the circulation of the blood, the action of the lungs, the kidneys and all the vital organs are controlled by its agency. It is not, however, the Intellect, that does the supervision over our body-processes, but it is the Sub-conscious mind. But the Sub-conscious seems to be familiar with it in every detail.

(4) It may be added that the Sub-conscious never sleeps; during the sleep of the Conscious it seems to be more vigilant than during our waking hours.

In comparison with these powers of the Sub-conscious those of the Conscious mind seem almost insignificant. The Conscious is, as it were, the ante-chamber where the crude energies of the Sub-conscious are selected and adapted for action on the world outside us. In the past we have unduly exaggerated the importance of the Conscious intellect. To claim for the Conscious the discoveries of civilisation is to confuse the instrument with the agent, to attribute sight to the field-glass instead of to the eye behind it.

The value of the Conscious mind must not be underrated however; it is a machine of great value, the seat of reason, of the social instincts and of moral concepts. But it is only a machine and not the engine, nor yet the engineer. It provides neither material nor power, these latter being furnished by the Sub-conscious.

These two strata of mental life are in perpetual inter-

action one with the other. Just as everything conscious has its preliminary step in the Sub-conscious, so every conscious thought passes down into the lower stratum and there becomes an element in our being, partaking of the sub-conscious energy and playing its part in supervising and determining our mental and bodily states. If it is a healthful thought we are so much the better, if it is a diseased one we are so much the worse. It is this transformation of a thought into an element of our life that we call Auto-Suggestion. Since this is only a normal part of the mind's action we shall have no difficulty in finding evidence of it in our daily experiences.

Walking down the street in a gloomy frame of mind you meet a buoyant, cheery acquaintance. The mere sight of his genial smile acts on you like a tonic, and when you have chatted with him for a few minutes your gloom has disappeared, giving place to cheerfulness and confidence. What has effected this change?—Nothing other than the idea in your own mind. As you watched his face, listened to his good-natured office, noticed the play of his smile, your Conscious mind was occupied by the idea of cheerfulness. This idea on being transferred to the Sub-conscious became a reality, so that without any logical grounds you became cheerful.

Few people, especially young people, are unacquainted with the effects produced by hearing or reading ghost-stories. You have spent the evening, let us say, at a friend's house listening to terrifying tales of apparitions. At a late hour, you leave the friend's house to make your way home. The states ot fear imaged before your mind have realised themselves in your Sub-conscious. You tread gingerly in the dark places, hurry past the church-yard or burial ground and feel a distinct relief when the lights of your home come into view. It is the same old road you might have so often traversed with perfect

equanimity, but its cheerful associations are overlooked and the commonest objects tinged with the colour of your subjective states. Auto-suggestion cannot change a post into a spectre, but if you are very impressionable it will so distort your sensory impressions that common sounds seem charged with supernatural significance and every-day objects take on terrifying shapes. In each of the above examples the idea of a mental state–cheerfulness or fear–was presented to the mind. The idea on reaching the Sub-conscious became a reality: that is to say, you actually became cheerful or frightened.

The same process is much easier to recognise where the resultant is not a mental but a bodily state.

One often meets people who take a delight in describing with a wealth of detail the disorders with which they or their friends are afflicted. A sensitive person is condemned by social usage to listen to a harrowing acconnt of some grave malady. As detail succeeds detail the listener feels a chilly discomfort stealing over him. He turns pale, breaks into a cold perspiration, and is aware of an unpleasant sensation at the pit of the stomach. Sometimes, generally where the listener is a child, actual vomiting or a fainting fit may ensure. These effects are undeniably physical; to produce them the organic processes must have been sensibly disturbed. Yet their cause lies entirely in the idea of illness, which, ruthlessly impressed upon the mind, realises itself in the Sub-conscious

This effect may be so precise as to reproduce the actual symptoms of the disease described.

Medical students engaged in the study of some particular malady frequently develop its characteristic symptoms.

Everyone is acquainted with the experience known as "stage fright". The victim may be a normal person, healthy both in mind and body. He may possess in private

life a good voice, a mind fertile in ideas and a gift of fluent expression. He may know quite surely that his audience is friendly and sympathetic to the ideas he wishes to unfold. But let him mount the steps of a platform. Immediately, his knees begin to tremble and his heart to palpitate; his mind becomes a blank or a chaos, his tongue and lips refuse to frame coherent sounds, and after a few stammerings he is forced to make a ludicrous withdrawal. The cause of this baffling experience lay in the thoughts which occupied the subject's mind before his public appearance. He was afraid of making himself ridiculous. He expected to feel uncomfortable, feared that he would forget his speech or be unable to express himself. These negative ideas, penetrating to the Sub-conscious, realised themselves, and precisely what he feared took place.

If you live in a town you probably see people who, in carelessly crossing the street, find themselves in danger of being run down by a vehicle. In this position they sometimes stand for an appreciable time "rooted, as it were, to the spot." This is because the danger seems so close that they imagine themselves powerless to elude it. As soon as this idea gives place to that of escape they get out of the way as fast as they can. If their first idea persisted, however, the actual powerlessness resulting from it would likewise persist, and unless the vehicle stopped or turned aside they would infallibly be run over.

One occasionally meets people suffering from a nervous complaint known as St. Vitus' Dance. They have a disconcerting habit of contorting their faces, screwing round their necks or twitching their shoulders. It is a well-known fact that those who come into close contact with them, living in the same house or working in the same place are liable to contract the same habit, often performing the action without themselves being aware of it. This is due to the operation of the same law. The

idea of the habit, being repeatedly presented to their minds, crystallises itself into fact and they begin to perform a similar movement in their own persons.

Children out of playfulness often imitate such things which after a few repetitions establishes itself as habit or second nature.

Examples of this law present themselves at every turn, such as fainting at sight of blood or feeling giddy while looking down from a great height. Hysterical subjects often show signs of neurosis such as loss of the power of speech or, of vision, some of loss of the use of limbs, or functional disturbance of any of the vital organs. The cause in each case is nothing more tangible than an idea which has become realised in the Sub-conscious.

These instances show clearly enough that the thoughts we think do actually become realities in the Sub-conscious. But is this a a universal law, operating in every life, or is it merely something contingent and occasional? Sometimes irrelevant cheerfulness seems only to make despondency more deep. Certain types of individuals are only irritated by the performance of a stage comedy. Physicians listen to the accounts of their patients' ailments without being in the least upset. These facts appear at first sight at variance with the universal law. But they are only apparent exceptions which serve to test and verify it. The physical and mental effect invariably corresponds with the idea present in the mind, but this need not be identical with the thought communicated from without. Sometimes a judgement interposes itself; or it may be that the idea calls up an associated idea which possesses greater vitality and therefore dislodges it. A gloomy person who meets a cheerful acquaintance may mentally contrast himself with the latter, setting his own troubles beside the other's good fortune, his own grounds for sadness beside the other's grounds for satisfaction. Thus the idea of his

own unhappiness is strengthened, and sinking into the Sub-conscious makes still deeper the despondency he experienced before.

In the same way the doctor, listening to the symptoms of a patient does not allow these distressful ideas to dwell in his conscious mind. His thought passes on immediately to the treatment, to the idea of help he must give. Not only does he manifest this helpfulness in reasoned action, but also, by sub-conscious realisation, in his very bearing and manner. Or, his mind may be concentrated on the scientific bearings of the case, so that he will involuntarily treat the patient as a specimen on which to pursue his researches.

The steeple-jack experiences no giddiness or fear in scaling the church spire, because the thought of danger is immediately replaced by the knowledge of his own clear head and sure foot.

This brings us to a point which is of great practical importance in what is known as Suggestive Therapy or Auto-suggestion. No idea presented to the mind can realise itself unless the Sub-conscious accepts it. In other words the basic law of auto-suggestion is as follows:-

Every idea which enters the Conscious mind, if it is accepted by the Sub-conscious, is transformed by it into a reality and forms henceforth a permanent element in our life.

This is the process called "Spontaneous Auto-suggestion." It is a law by which the mind of man has always worked, and by which all our minds are working daily.

It must thus be evident that if we fill our Conscious minds with ideas of health, joy, goodness, efficiency, and can ensure their acceptation by the Sub-conscious, these ideas too will become realities, capable of lifting us on to a new plane of being. The difficulty which has hitherto so frequently brought these hopes to naught is that of ensuring acceptation.

Thus, the whole process of auto-suggestion consists of two steps: (1) The acceptation of an idea (by the Sub-conscious), and (2) Its transformation into a reality by the same. Whether the idea is originated in the mind of the subject (spontaneous auto-suggestion) or presented to the mind from without by the agency of another person (induced auto-suggestion) is a matter of indifference. In both cases the idea undergoes the same process: it is submitted to the Sub-conscious, accepted or rejected, and so either realised or ignored.

In essentials all suggestion is auto-suggestion. The only distinction we need make is between spontaneous auto-suggestion, which takes place independently of our will and choice, and induced auto-suggestion, in which we consciously select the ideas we wish to realise and purposely convey them to the Sub-conscious. The only difficulty which confronts us in the practice of induced auto-suggestion is to ensure acceptation, and that is a difficulty which no method prior to that of Emile Coue has satisfactorily surmounted.

Every idea which enters the mind is charged to a greater or less extent with emotion. This emotional charge may be imperceptible as with ideas to which we are indifferent; or it may be very great as when the idea is closely related to our personal interests. All the ideas we are likely to make the subjects of induced auto-suggestion are of the latter class, since they refer to health, energy, success or some goal equally dear to our hearts. The greater the degree of emotion accompanying an idea, the more potent is the auto-suggestion resulting from it Thus a moment of violent fright may give rise to effects which last a life-time. This emotional factor also plays a large part in securing acceptation.

We may think of the Sub-conscious as a tide which ebbs and flows. In sleep it seems to submerge the Cons-

cious altogether, while at full wakefulness, when the attention and will are both at work, the tide is at its lowest ebb. Between these two extremes are any number of intermediary levels. When we are drowsy or dreamy, or lulled into a gentle reverie by music or by a picture of a poem, the sub-conscious tide is high; the more wakeful and alert we become the lower it sinks. This submersion of the Conscious is called the "out cropping of the Sub-conscious." The highest degree of "out-cropping," compatible with the conscious direction of our thoughts occurs just before we fall asleep and just after we wake, and during what we call "day-dream" or "brown-study," when the sub-conscious tide is high. These day-dreams cause very potent auto-suggestions, and one should take care that they are wholesome and innocent. They are highly favourable to acceptation.

If, on getting into bed at night, we assume a comfortable posture, relax our muscles and close the eyes, we fall naturally into a stage of semi-consciousness akin to that of day-dreaming. If now we introduce into the mind any desired idea, it is freed from the inhibiting associations of daily life, associates itself by similarity, and attracts emotion of the same quality as its own charge. The Sub-conscious is thus caused to accept it, and inevitably it is turned into an auto-suggestion. Everytime we repeat this process the associative power of the idea is increased, its emotional value grows greater, and the auto-suggestion resulting from it is more powerful. By this means we can induce the Sub-conscious to accept an idea, the normal associations of which are contrary and unfavourable. The person with a disease-soaked mind can gradually implant ideas of health, filling the Sub-conscious daily with healing thoughts. The instrument we use is thought, and the condition essential to success is that the Conscious mind shall be lulled to rest. Auto-suggestion can thus be use-

fully applied by oneself for improving one's health and character and for ensuring success in life.

Induced auto-suggestion has yielded best results in cases of patients suffering from insomnia, hypochondriasis, epilepsy, hysteria and other functional neuroses, where there is no definite pathological change in the system; and also in the correction of vices and criminal tendencies, drink-habit, etc.

"No doubt, modern psychology has to its credit some noteworthy discoveries, e. g., the function and importance of the Sub-conscious mind. But these point only to the great findings of ancient philosophy and religion: that the only direction in which to look for reality is inside of One-self. Reality is first psychological and then everything else. If therefore psychology is to make any advance at all it must start with the Self. But Science including psychology has hitherto made the not-Self its only preoccupation."

(*Guru Dutt—A Hindu View of Culture*), *P. 105.*

Chief References

1. In tune with the Infinite - Ralph Waldo Trine.
2. The Practice of Auto-Suggestion by the method of Emile Coue - C. Harry Brooks.

CONCLUSION

We have thus seen that there are various paths that one may take in order to find God, to realise Him. Says Sree Krishna:

"In whatever way men worship Me, in the same way do I fulfil their desires. (It is) My Path, O Partha, (that) men tread, in all ways." (Gita IV. 11)

Again, "Whatsoever form any devotee seeks to worship with shraddh*a*-that shraddh*a* of his do I make unwavering." (Gita VII. 21)

"Endued with that shraddh*a*, he engages in the worship of that, and from it gains his desires-these being verily dispensed by Me alone." (Gita VII-22)

The above quotations contain the central idea of the Gita, and the essence of Hinduism-"All paths to God are one, and all religions one."

Again, "Beyond Me, O Dhananjaya, there is naught. All this is strung in Me, as a row of jewels on a thread." (There is no other cause of the universe but Me.) (Gita VII. 7)

Again, "I am the Self, O Gud*a*kesha, existent in the heart of all beings; I am the beginning, the middle, and also the end of all beings." (Gita X. 20)

Also, " Never the Spirit was born,
Never the Spirit shall cease to be;
Never was time It was not;
End and beginning are dreams!
Birthless and deathless and changeless
Remaineth the Spirit for ever,
Death hath not touched it at all,
Dead though the house of it seems." (Gita II. 20)

This is perhaps the highest and the greatest principle that the Hindu has received to work upon. "Because of

this" says Maitra, "the Hindu has never burnt any heretic, in fact he has never looked upon any one as a heretic. His land has been the land of freedom for all religions, however antagonistically the followers of any sect may have attacked the principles of Hinduism; the Hindu knows that God is the indweller of every heart and soul. In Hinduism there is no sect, hence no sectarianism; all the different cults are simply the growth of the human mind in its relation to the Universal; he does not condemn, therefore, either Moslem or Christian."

A Hindu will readily part with a piece of land for the building of a mosque, or church, as he thinks that "man must grow by his Dharma." A religion of real growth will never say, "Throw away that faith and accept mine." It will say "Try to grow within the law of your own being." Whereas a religion of creed will say "your religion is bad, accept mine and you will be saved."

The Hindu salvation is different; it is the liberation of the Soul from Avidy*a* (Ignorance); this he tries to accomplish not by accepting any particular creed, but by developing his spiritual powers through training and discipline. And this training and discipline, we saw, is the very life of the Hindu. All his attention is directed towards that.

Training and discipline, of course, are not his end, but he knows that they are the means, a very great means indeed, to an end, namely the realisation of God in all things.

If God were an abstract God, it is argued, He could have little to do with humanity, and Creation would be impossible. It is because God is Love that He "Willed Creation to be;" for Love must by its very nature express itself.

"Love must ever give; by its own law of love it must create new objects for its love; and thus the universe was

formed, the human heart of God." From God, who is Love, has creation come, and all creation is ever seeking the Home from whence it came. Through the devotion of the heart, the devotee becomes one with the Beloved; yet is there ever a union beyond union, a joy beyond joy, a love beyond love in the Infinite Heart?

It is this human note in his realisation of the "One whose Glory is Loving" that fills the heart of the devotee with a rapture that has overflowed in the wonderful songs of the Vaishnava Saints, and has embodied itself in the countless stories of Sree Krishna exemplifying the promise of the Gita, that in whatever way we worship Him, in that way will he manifest Himself unto us, as Father, Friend or Mother.

"That God must answer the sincere cry of the heart is the unalterable faith of the Hindus." "Thou didst call, I am here," says Sree Krishna to Sage Narada, the sweet Singer and Devotee. "I am not always found on my Throne in my Abode of Love (Vaikuntha), nor am I always found in the hearts of yogis. But where my name is intoned in the voice of love in the heart of my Bhaktas, there, O Narada, do I stay and am always found." (Bhagavata)

Naham vasami Vaikunthe na yogeenam hridaye piva, madbhakta yatra gayanti tatra tisthami Narada.

Thus for more than 5000 years, the Hindus have been realising their ideals through the various paths of the Heart, the Mind and the Soul. Many a time their idealism has been in danger of being desecrated. Then there have been born great and mighty ones to adjust their life to the traditional path of spiritual culture.

The cultural ideal has been the note kept through all the ages. And 5000 years ago the mighty genius who came to give us a great awakening was – perhaps the greatest of these – Sree Krishna. Then came the great Gautama, The

Buddha – the Enlightened. He left his palace-home, wife and child to seek the Ideal. He realised It. When our Hindu ancestors forgot for the time being the true Path and were busy in rituals and ceremonies without entering into their meaning, Buddha came and said:

"Not by flowers or sandal powder,
Not by music's heavenly strain,
Is the Soul's true worship rendered.
Useless are those things and vain!
But the brother and the sister,
Man devout and woman holy,
Pure in life, in duty faithful
They perform the worship truly!"

It was in Buddha's time that the doctrine of Karma and Re-incarnation received particular emphasis, though of course, it appears full-blown in the Gita and pre-supposes a long antecedent history. "What ye sow, you reap even in birth after birth" – that is the doctrine of Karma.

The epoch between the close of the Upanishadik period and the rise of Buddhism–very imperfectly illuminated yet by historical research–seems to have been marked by great democratic movements in the evolution of Hindu religious thought, and the gospel of Buddha himself is perhaps only one extreme issue and form of the prevailing spirit.

It was at this time that there grew up the beautiful and profound doctrine of Nara and Narayana, the human and the Divine Soul. According to this School of thought, the Supreme Brahman split Himself into two–Nara and Narayana – who together constitute a mystic unity in duality. They are ever engaged in bearing the burden of the worlds (*bhubhara*). Each needs the other for his fulfilment and fruition. And God is as much compelled to seek man as man does to seek God. And where is man to be sought except on the Earth? By inward necessity

Narayana has to become Nara and give chase to man, however much he may seek to flee or fight his Divine pursuer. It may sound paradoxical, but nevertheless it may be true that the perfect man is but Narayana crucified. In other words "the dynamic Divine is the human perfect."

Buddha is also considered one of the great Avataras. His teaching also became ultimately another grand note in the "realm of inquiry" and remains to-day as the "everlasting possession of the Hindu race."

Then came the great Shamkara, who emphasized once more the Path of Jnana or Knowledge. And from the 12th Century down, a series of great Teachers–Ramanuja, Madhwa, Ramananda, Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya and in our days Sree Ramakrishna (1836–86)–who developed the Spirit of Bhakti to a wonderful height. They all came to stir up their people to carry on the Ideal. They all came in when our Country was falling into the "evils of forgetfulness to call Him back."

But beneath the surface of all the different movements, "the one grand note that encircles and throbs in them" is the note struck by Humanity's first Apostle–Sree Krishna. He is the central name in both Indian history and Indian religion. He is simply the human Ideal, the greatest of the Avataras. For, He has revealed Himself in human form, not once, but many times. As the Gita has it: (IV. 7, 8)

"I come, and go, and come. When Righteousness
Declines, O Bharata, when wickedness
Is strong, I rise from age to age and take
Visible shape, and move a man with man,
Succouring the good, thrusting the evil back,
And setting Virtue on her seat again."

Now, whatever the belief in the relative humanity and divinity in the great Teachers of the world, Sree Krishna is the Great Teacher. It is he who struck for the first time in the history of evolution, the doctrine of Harmony, One–

ness of all Life, One-ness of all Paths to God. This doctrine is not only the legacy of the Hindus but of the entire world, Karma, Jnana and Bhakti are all everlasting ideals; all the three must move in harmonic speed; each is necessary for the other, and thus there must be harmonious growth of the human soul, the human mind and the human heart.

It is Sree Krishna who has become the great Ideal of the Hindu race. He includes all Paths, we have seen. Work is indispensable, He says, but you must do that work which is worth-doing, and when you work you must have no desire of your own in the work. Dedicate all to God.

The high and noble teachings of Sree Krishna have been embodied in that greatest book – the Bhagavad Gita, the Song Divine; and any one who wishes to understand the ideals of Hinduism should read the Gita. The Gita is an epitome of the Vedas in simple, harmonised and humanised form. Its supreme message in the words of the Lord Himself is as follows:—

"Hear thou again My Supreme word, the profoundest of all; because thou art dearly beloved of Me, therefore will I speak what is good to thee." (Gita XVIII. 64.)

"Occupy thy mind with Me, be devoted to Me, sacrifice to Me, bow down to Me. Thou shalt reach Myself; truly do I promise unto thee, (for) thou art dear to Me."

(Ibid XVIII. 65.)

"Let go all those formalities of religion and duty. Take refuge in Me alone. Do not grieve, for I will release thee from all thy sins." (Ibid XVIII. 66.)

The discourse between Arjuna and Sree Krishna on the battlefield, as mentioned above under Karma-yoga, forms the subject-matter of the Gita and was strung together by Sage Vyasa in the form of verse. The scene

opens with King Dhritarastra's query to Sanjaya about the progress of events on the battlefield. Sage Vyasa had offered the power of sight - Television - to the blind King, but the King declined the offer saying that he did not care to have sight with which only to see the death of his own kinsmen, but, he said, he would like to hear what was happening there. On this the great Rishi said that all the occurrences on the battlefield would be reflected in the mind of Sanjaya, and that Sanjaya would faithfully report them to the King.

The moral of the Gita in the words of Sanjaya is this:

"Wherever is Sree Krishna (Narayana), the Lord of yoga (for grace and guidance) and wherever is Partha (Nara) the wielder of the Gandhiva) ready for action and determined to fight evil) there are prosperity, victory, expansion and sound policy. Such is my conviction."

"The Perfect Hero is a unity of Nara and Narayana Fountains of Karma and Grace."

Om! Asatoma sadgamaya Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya
Mrityorma Amritamgamaya. Om!

"Om! Lead me from the unreal unto the Real, from darkness unto Light and from death unto Immortality. Om!"

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